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The Targets and Techniques of Irony in Fielding's Satire, *Jonathan Wild*

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Targets and Techniques of Irony in Fielding's Satire, Jonathan Wild" submitted by Margaret Stoneman Baldwin in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

It is argued in this thesis that Jonathan Wild, if judged as a prose satire rather than a novel, is not the slipshod work which many critics have termed it. Wild is best known for its sustained verbal irony, which has been variously judged to be "playful," "acrid," unsophisticated and monotonous, or second only to the irony in Swift's Tale of a Tub. Much of this thesis is therefore concerned with the linguistic devices involved in Fielding's irony, in order to determine more precisely its emotional and technical quality.

As a background to this analysis of Wild's style, the elements of characterization and structure are discussed. Since Wild is a satire, however, it is argued that the primary artistic requirements are more essayistic than novelistic in nature. Wild is therefore tested against the requirements of thematic unity and urbane "manner" (i.e., style), as expounded particularly by Dryden in his summary of contemporary satiric theory. In addition to the well-known political and social themes of Wild, it is demonstrated that a substantial portion of the satire is aimed at various literary targets; especially the writers and readers of romance, rogue biography, and serious biography. In this context, the relationship between the

narrator and reader of Wild is shown to be at least as instructive as any relationship between the "characters" themselves.

The literary satire is largely aimed at corruption in linguistic habits, and is therefore directly related to the linguistic texture of the irony as a whole. A close reading reveals that the irony is not limited to simple inversion (i.e., blame-by-praise or praise-by-blame); rather, it consists of a wide range of semantic effects involving the connotations of individual words, as well as significant patterns of emphasis, ambiguity, and mock-logic arising from the syntactic structure of individual sentences and paragraphs. This so-called "wordplay" is shown to be related to Fielding's philosophical and ethical beliefs in order to demonstrate that Wild is a mature, intelligent satire which deserves closer attention.

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Chapter One: The Satiric Background

Henry Fielding has been traditionally classified as a father of the novel genre, and modern readers and critics who consider him a major figure in English literature do so on the basis of his skills as a novelist, rather than as a satirist. Even one of his strongest detractors, F. R. Leavis, believes that Fielding, as a contributor to the novel form, "deserves the place of importance given him in the literary histories,"[1] though he is really only a minor artist:

> Fielding's attitudes, and his concern with human nature, are simple, and not such as to produce an effect of anything but monotony (on a mind, that is, demanding more than external action) when exhibited at the length of an 'epic in prose'.[2]

What Leavis expects from the novel form is "subtlety" of character development and an exploration of "psychology," (that is, the complexity of interpersonal relationships). Leavis distinguishes the truly "great English novelists" by their lack of "disgust or disdain or boredom":

> . . . they are all distinguished by a vital capacity for experience, a kind of reverent openness before life, and a marked moral intensity.

The great novels make a serious appeal to "minds with mature interests."[3] By implication, then, Fielding's works are

immature, especially Jonathan Wild, which Leavis considers a novel: "Jonathan Wild, with its famous irony, seems to me mere hobbledehoydom (much as one applauds the determination to explode the gangster-hero). . . ."[4] In his dismissal of Jonathan Wild, Leavis is not alone among critics. Andrew Wright, who delights in Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones as "works of art," has nothing but disdain for Wild:

> Jonathan Wild is neither a novel nor a philosophical work: it is an entirely simple handling of one idea--or at most two. It is a diatribe against 'greatness' and an apology for 'goodness'. Jonathan Wild is a tract.[5]

Both Wright and Leavis consider Wild unsophisticated, but it is difficult to determine how much their judgment is based on actual faults in the book's structure and style, and how much it owes to their apparent dislike of satire in general. Wright criticizes Amelia partly because he perceives in it a "drift . . . toward satire, which (for Fielding) is if not second childishness, at best retrogression to the rhetorical imperatives of Jonathan Wild . . . ."[6] Although Wright, unlike Leavis, argues for comedy, he shares with Leavis a curiously religious view of the purpose of literature. This religious view is evident in the key terms in their discussions. Wright praises Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones for their "festive celebration,"[7] and Leavis, as his definition of great novelists indicates,

requires a "reverent openness before life" (my emphasis). Leavis's dislike for "disgust or disdain" in a novelist is also echoed by Wright's complaint that Jonathan Wild ". . . is thoroughly angry."[8] Both critics imply that satire is a lower form of literature than the novel.

Other critics dismiss Jonathan Wild when discussing Fielding's novels, because they conclude that it is a prose satire, and therefore inferior as art. As Homes Dudden notes: "The book is a satire, cast in the form of an allegorical tale, and cannot with strict propriety be classified as a novel."[9] Dudden praises Wild for its structure and irony, but he, like Wright, dislikes its 'angry' tone. In Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, according to Dudden, the irony is relatively "genial" and "playful."

> In Jonathan Wild, however, the irony is concerned, not with the humorous unmasking of ridiculous affectations, but with the serious exhibition and castigation of malignant vices. Its tone, therefore, is different; it is now acrid, incisive, mordant, implacably severe. The subject is utterly vile, and the irony is correspondingly grim and merciless.[10]

The hyperbole of this judgment renders it suspicious, much like Wright's damning label for Wild: "that satiric blast."[11]

There are, of course, a few critics who have praised Jonathan Wild as a satire. Perhaps the strongest admirer of

the book is George Saintsbury, whose characterization of the book is remarkably at odds with those who view Wild as "grim" or "angry" satire: "It is to me one of the few thoroughly amusing books I know; a book to which for thirty years I have gone for rest and refreshment."[12] Saintsbury's praise of Wild has been discounted by recent critics, apparently because they are put off by his opening statement: "Fielding has written no greater book than Jonathan Wild. . . ." Robert Hopkins, among others, takes this to mean "that Wild is the best of Fielding's works . . ."; this opinion, he realizes, no one would endorse.[13] But Saintsbury's statement, if read carefully and in context, does not actually suggest that Wild is superior to the classic Tom Jones and Joseph Andrews. In effect, Saintsbury, concerned with defending Wild against its detractors, only asserts that Wild is on an equivalent plane with Fielding's novels.[14] For those who do not share Saintbury's special or acquired taste for irony or satire, and who judge Fielding's work primarily by novel-criteria, Jonathan Wild seems certain to fail.

Saintsbury gives Wild high ranking largely on the basis of its sustained, "almost pure irony":

> It is his Tale of a Tub; and though he was not quite so mighty a man as Swift, and had the additional disadvantage of coming after him, I should rank it only second in its own class to that . . . masterpiece,

> and superior to it in a certain unity and completeness. . . .[15]

Unfortunately, Saintsbury does not explain what he means by "pure irony"; nor does he give precise evidence or illustrations from Wild to support his praise of the book's coherence. In fact, Jonathan Wild has never been intensively studied in the way that Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones have. It has been considered mainly as a practicing ground for the novels, or as simply an extension of Fielding's concerns as a political satirist in his periodical, The Champion. This view is expressed concisely by William Irvin, whose membership in the novel-club of critics is evident:

> During a dozen years of writing miscellaneous kinds of satire [Fielding] was dealing with comic and satiric principles and devices which became a flexible theory of comedy operating in the novels. Thus achievement in inferior forms prepared him for triumph in greater.[16]

It would seem more fair, as well as more interesting, to judge Jonathan Wild on its own terms as a prose satire, according to the rules of "its own class," as Saintsbury puts it, without any pre-conceived notions that the novel is, as a literary form, superior to the prose satire.

An attempt by Robert Hopkins to give Wild due justice as a satire, though well-motivated, seems to miss the mark due to Hopkins's failure to clearly define "satire" itself. He reacts to those who have called Wild a "grim" work by

asserting that it is a "comic masterpiece" of humorous wordplay aimed at revitalizing abused superlatives and metaphors.[17] By perhaps over-reacting to critics of Wild's "grimness," Hopkins seems to lean toward the school which conceives of Fielding as a great humorist, and little else. This conception of Fielding, as expressed by A. E. Dyson, is associated with the same sort of recoil from satire and Swiftian 'misanthropy' which Leavis and Wright, and others, share:

> As a stylist [Fielding] was indebted to Swift, but as a man he was about as dissimilar to Swift as he could have been. . . . he is too good-humoured for satire. He lacks the misanthropy to carry off the disgust which he must frequently profess to feel.[18]

Hopkins, though he wants to call Jonathan Wild a satire, may also want to preserve Fielding from a bad reputation like Swift's. Nevertheless, Hopkins's failure to differentiate comedy from satire is serious, since the distinction is vital to appreciating the value of satire.

As Patricia Spacks explains, despite the difficulties of defining satire as a genre, the primary satiric response of "uneasiness" may serve as a key to separating satire from comedy or tragedy, which offer their audiences the "security and satifaction of emotional release."[19] She notes that satire is analogous to Bertolt Brecht's theory of the 'epic theatre':

> This theatre 'demands decisions' of the spectator instead of allowing him feelings. It uses arguments rather than suggestion to affect the audience. . . .[20]

The auditor or reader, through a mixture of inseparable pleasure and pain, is hopefully stimulated to some kind of corrective action. In other words, the uneasy laughter of satire makes it " 'a sort of writing very like tickling' " (Pope, in a letter on The Rape of the Lock).[21]

As a background to a fair assessment of Jonathan Wild, these definitions of satire may be compared with both the theory and the actual practice of early eighteenth-century satirists. The most direct source of satiric theory is Dryden's Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire, published in 1693. Dryden's essay refers specifically to the genre defined in eighteenth-century dictionaries as 'invective poetry'; however, as P. K. Elkin remarks, the word "satire" was commonly associated with

> . . . all sorts and types of writing: epistles, diatribes, encomia, squibs, lampoons, puffs, essays, fables, dialogues, plays, travel-books, romances, rehearsals, footnotes, advertisements, critiques, and histories.[22]

At any rate, the form of satire is far less important to Dryden than are its purpose and 'manner.' As part of his discussion of the purpose of satire, Dryden alludes to the origin of literature in general in religious festivals and describes the beginnings of satirical poetry specifically

among the ancient Romans. The Romans, whose holidays "were a mixture of devotion and debauchery, had a custom of reproaching each other with their faults, in a sort of ex tempore poetry. . . ."[23] This form of merriment was eventually refined into a more polished sort of "pleasant raillery . . . without any mixture of obscenity." In effect, Dryden's scholarly discussion grants satire equal dignity with other forms of literature, since satire is grounded just as firmly in human nature. In view of Leavis's opinions about "reverence" in literature, it is significant that the serious devotional part of both the Greek and Roman festivals was always relieved by the satirical. One may suppose that similar motivations caused even the most serious English plays of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to end in irreverently comic or satiric epilogues.

Despite its rather rude beginnings, satire has a very serious and civilized purpose, as Dryden makes clear. The purpose of the satirist is strongly moral: "to correct the vices and follies of his time, and to give the rules of a happy and virtuous life."[24] Dryden takes some pains to explain what he means by "folly," since he believes it represents a far more serious problem than vice:

> Folly was the proper quarry of Horace, and not vice; and as there are but few notoriously wicked men, in comparison with a shoal of fools and fops, so 'tis a harder thing to make a man wise than to

> make him honest; for the will is only to be reclaimed in the one, but the understanding is to be informed in the other.[25]

This is the basis of the distinction between Horatian and Juvenalian satire. Whereas Juvenal attacks the insupportable viciousness of a few men, Horace deals mainly with the commonplace (i.e., "low") errors of men in general. Of course, as Elkin has noted, eighteenth-century satire was generally a combination of both Juvenalian and Horatian modes. Elkin disagrees with Dryden's statement that "Folly was the proper quarry of Horace, and not vice," since the subjects of Horace's satire ("cruelty, murder, adultery, megalomania, etc.") are, in Elkin's opinion, very serious. Elkin concludes that Dryden confuses Horace's "manner" with his "matter."[26] It may be debatable whether Dryden or Horace would share Elkin's opinion of the seriousness of these particular crimes; in any case, it is clear from Dryden's statements that he considers dishonesty to be worse than any other vice, and the sheer stupidity of men (i.e., their 'folly') to be much more harmful than their susceptibility to passionate vices.

Fielding's agreement with Dryden's view of vice and folly is evident in the distinction which he makes (in the 'Author's Preface' to Joseph Andrews) between the two forms of affectation: vanity and hypocrisy. The hypocrite, if

carried to an extreme, may correspond with Dryden's "notoriously wicked men"; however, most men's errors proceed from ignorance or vanity.[27] Fielding's stress on the "Ridiculous" implies his adherence to Horatian satire, which can be demonstrated for Jonathan Wild as well as Joseph Andrews. As will be shown later, Fielding's narrative technique seems directly related to Dryden's concept of the purpose of satire. When Dryden notes the satirist's duty to "give the rules of a happy and virtuous life," he has in mind a more intelligent interaction between the satirist and his audience than his phrase would indicate. As Dryden explains later, quoting the critic Dacier on Horace, the satirist should not only " 'instruct us how to combat our vices, to regulate our passions . . .,' " but also how

> 'to distinguish betwixt truth and falsehood, and betwixt our conceptions of things, and things themselves; to come back from our prejudicate opinions, ... to understand exactly the principles and motives of all our actions. . . .'[28]

The satirist does not so much give his readers answers as he does teach them to question, to examine rationally the "notions which they have received from their masters."[28] Fielding's well-known emphasis on judging motives as opposed to actions,[29] and his ridicule of the merely superficial virtues, such as chastity, agree very well with this view of ethics. Also of interest is the similarity between Dryden's

description of the satirist's duty to teach his audience to be critical, and Patricia Spacks's analogy of satire with Brecht's desire to provoke his auditors to exercise their judgment (see above, p. 6). Incidentally, Brecht's use of "arguments rather than suggestion to affect the audience" demonstrates how much closer satire is to the essay form than to the novel.

Dryden's account of the purpose of satire would seem to place satire in the same realm of great literature which F. R. Leavis delineates for the novel. That is, satire, like the novel, should possess "moral intensity" (Leavis's term). And the satirist's concern for his audience's powers of reason and judgment surely qualifies satire for appreciation by what Leavis calls "minds with mature interests." Leavis's desire for an exploration of "psychology," or the complexity of interpersonal relationships, is really quite similar to Dryden's (or Dacier's) comment that the satirist should help us " 'to understand exactly the principles and motives of all our actions.' " The difference is that Leavis wants to study psychology by sympathizing with complex, thoroughly developed characters. Certainly, Fielding's fiction does not permit this. Psychological and other novels differ from other forms of fiction, as Ian Watt has pointed out, by "the individualization of [their] characters and . . . the detailed presentation of [the characters'] environment."[30]

This sort of realism is, of course, a necessary means of allowing the novel reader to identify with the characters and intimately share their experiences and thoughts. But may not the reader of satire, through his intense relationship with the narrator, also learn much about interpersonal relationships and about the nature of his _own_ psyche?

Perhaps an argument could be made that Fielding has been misunderstood for years as the result of being labelled a novelist, rather than a satirist. Patricia Spacks argues that _Joseph Andrews_ is not simply comic with touches of satire, but is rather dominated by a consistent satiric intention to privately correct each reader's own faults. This purpose, which she feels is much more significant than the occasional complacent 'libelling' of various well-known persons, is achieved through constant reminders of our self-delusion: "Over and over _Joseph Andrews_ calls our attention to people's deep conviction of their own rightness."[31] This applies, of course, to even the most likable characters. If they were to consider not only _Jonathan Wild_, but also _Tom Jones_ and _Joseph Andrews_ as primarily satires rather than novels, modern readers might gain a truer appreciation of Fielding's role in English literature. For example, criticisms such as Leavis makes about the structure of Fielding's novels--that they provide only an experience of "external action"--become quite unreasonable if one tests

Fielding's work against the structural requirements of satire.

In his Discourse, Dryden considers structure only an incidental element of satire. Once again, satire is similar to the essay form, because its structure is organized according to the demands of the writer's moral themes rather than the demands of complex plot or character development. Dryden's admiration for artistic "unity" does assert itself, but the unity is thematic rather than structural. The "perfect satire"

> ought only to treat of one subject; to be confined to one particular theme; or at least, to one principally. If other vices occur in the management of the chief, they should only be transiently lashed, and not be insisted on, so as to make the design double.[32]

The structure should concentrate the audience's attention on "some one particular vice or folly" and "some one precept of moral virtue," although the main theme may be "illustrated accordingly with variety of examples." Though he dislikes the unruly "hotchpotch" nature of Horace's satires, Dryden allows for considerable looseness in satiric composition, which is only fair in view of the rambling and digressive nature of Dryden's own discourses. As long as he adheres to one main theme, which he is to perpetually point out and drive home to his readers, the satirist's invention is virtually unrestrained in the area of "examples" or

"illustrations." In practice, as Ronald Paulson explains, most satire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries takes full advantage of this structural freedom, in the spirit of a feature of the ancient Roman festivals--satura lanx, a platter "filled to overflowing with meats finely chopped and heavily seasoned":

> Thus from the Roman etymology, satura implies a form at least roughly dramatic into which almost anything can be poured. . . .[33]

Dryden's rule that satire should concentrate on a single vice or folly, and a corresponding single virtue, may seem to justify Andrew Wright's dismissal of Jonathan Wild as "an entirely simple handling of one idea--or at most two. . . . a diatribe against 'greatness' and an apology for 'goodness'. . . ." (see above, p. 2). However, Wright, like others who consider Wild little more than a moral allegory, seems to have in mind only the shallowest meanings of these themes as they are explicitly defined by the narrator himself. That there is really much more than this to Fielding's exploration of 'greatness' and 'goodness' will be demonstrated below. As Robert Hopkins argues, the meaning of a complex satire like Jonathan Wild cannot be summarized so easily, ". . . for surely meaning resides in both structure and language, not ultimately in the extrinsic theses abstracted from these elements."[34]

The importance of language to the meaning of satire is also indicated in Dryden's Discourse. Dryden stresses two criteria for satire: a single moral theme with general applicability, and well-mannered but poignant wit. For ridiculing the grossest of vices, Juvenal's vehement, sarcastic type of wit is most appropriate. Despite its anger, Juvenalian laughter is very healthy. However, for most satiric purposes, since most men are not downright "vicious," "fine raillery" such as Horace was master of is the best tool, though it requires great talent:

> How easy is it to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those opprobrious terms! . . . there is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man, and the fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place.[35]

It is difficult to imagine a more exquisite metaphor to describe the effectiveness of sophisticated irony. Though Dryden does not use the word "irony," this is clearly what he means.

In eighteenth-century usage, "satire" embraced very unmannerly "malicious slander or libel" as well as works whose tone was much more "lighthearted" or at least soberly moral,[36] but the ideal of controlled, socially constructive satire was still strongly upheld. Fielding's justification

for satiric literature is of special interest for its opinion of human nature:

> Examples may perhaps have more Advantage over Precepts, in teaching us to avoid what is odious, than in impelling us to pursue what is amiable. . . .[37]
>
> . . . the reason is perhaps obvious enough, and may be that we are more inclined to detest and loath what is odious in others, than to admire what is laudable. . . .[38]

Fielding's satiric fiction is thus based on what some would call a pessimistic, but others would call only a realistic understanding of human motivation. It may be objected that the opening paragraph of Joseph Andrews seems to argue, to the contrary, that good examples are better than bad ones:

> It is a trite but true observation, that examples work more forcibly on the mind than precepts: and if this be just in what is odious and blameable, it is more strongly so in what is amiable and praiseworthy. (Joseph Andrews, Chap. 1, p. 13)

Despite what Fielding's narrator ostensibly says here, there are several good reasons for believing that this enthusiasm for good examples is actually assumed or ironic. First, the Covent Garden Journal statement preferring bad examples was written in 1752; a full ten years after Joseph Andrews was published. It seems unlikely that Fielding would have upheld 'bad examples' in 1740 (in the quotation from The Champion), changed to favoring 'good examples' in 1742 (Joseph Andrews), then reversed his view again by 1752. Second, the

narrator of Jonathan Wild should not be considered identical with Fielding; the periodical essays, on the other hand, may more safely be considered straightforward expressions of Fielding's own views. Third, the context of the entire first chapter of Joseph Andrews argues for an ironic interpretation of its opening sentence, since the literary works which the narrator cites to prove the usefulness of good examples include the history of John the Great, the Giantkiller; and the lives of Colley Cibber and Pamela Andrews (Joseph Andrews, pp. 13-14)! The argument that Joseph Andrews began as a satire but matured into a good-natured novel which represents the true Henry Fielding is well-established. However, one might argue that Joseph Andrews is a more consistently ironic or satiric work than most readers believe.[39]

If Jonathan Wild can be shown to attain the standards of satiric purpose and coherence which Dryden outlines in his Discourse, Leavis's charge that Wild is an awkward, clumsy, immature production (i.e., "mere hobbledehoydom") should lose its credibility. Further, if the verbal irony in Wild can be shown to maintain consistently the tone of urbane raillery which Dryden celebrates in Horace, the view that Wild is a repulsively "angry" or "grim" work may be discounted. A close analysis of the targets and themes, as well as the language, of Jonathan Wild will demonstrate that

this book is more complex and more worthy of attention than most of Fielding's critics have concluded.

Chapter Two: Themes, Characterization, and Targets

Critics who have analysed *Jonathan Wild* at all tend to agree that its major theme is not difficult to isolate, though they differ considerably in their interpretations of the book's structure and satiric targets. As David Evans explains, the apparent theme or subject of *Wild* is a rather simple conflict between the vice "greatness" and the virtue "goodness":

> The one thing that all discussions of *Jonathan Wild* have in common is their acceptance of the goodness-greatness conflict as the core and ultimate meaning of the book's moral drama. . . .[1]

The attack on false "greatness," or the political focus of the book, has long been recognized, especially since John Well's detailed discussion of the book's barely disguised satire on *the* "Great Man" of the period, Robert Walpole. Leavis also identifies this "determination to explode the gangster-hero" as the central theme, and one which is morally commendable (see above, pp. 1-2). Of course, there is nothing particularly original or subtle about Fielding's basic practice here, as Wells explains, for "hundreds of pamphlets and thousands of periodical writings had habituated the public to the association of the term, 'Great Man,' commonly in capital letters or italics," with Walpole

and corruption in government generally, by the time Wild was written.[2] Wells's theory is that the political satire is mainly concentrated in those passages describing Wild's interaction with his "gang," including several chapters and sections of commentary which Fielding "went out of his way, to the detriment of the unity of the story, to drag in at prominent places."[3]

One of the baldly political incidents which Wells has in mind is the contest between Wild and a character called Roger Johnson for the support of the debtors in Newgate (Jonathan Wild, IV, 3).[4] The debtors represent English taxpayers, who are to be plundered no matter which party is in power; Johnson represents Walpole; and Wild represents the Earl of Wilmington, who became First Lord of the Treasury after Walpole retired in 1742.[5] There is also an attempt here by Fielding to give symbolic meaning to the characters' clothing, much as Swift had done with his Allegory of Coats in A Tale of a Tub. Fielding's symbolism is not particularly clever or fresh, and the chapter does very much seem inserted, though it is not actually long enough to cause an unacceptable break in the action. Of course, the change in Wild's satiric personality itself is in no way a flaw because, as Dudden comments:

> Strict consistency was no part of the technique of the Opposition satirists. In The Beggar's Opera, for instance, Walpole

> is represented mainly by Peachum, but also sometimes by Macheath and others.[6]

Wells considers the political satire to be only one feature of Wild, not its chief object. His criticism that the "unity of the story" is damaged in a number of places is interesting, as it implies a sensibility (similar to Leavis's) which prefers a continuous, credible narrative (a "story") and characters. But again, that has never been the main purpose of prose satire.

In addition to the political implications of "greatness," the moral conflict between "greatness" and "goodness" has occupied much of the critics' time. William Irwin discusses the theme of goodness, or good-nature, as a well-established moral concept frequently treated "in the popular literature of the first forty years of the eighteenth century."[7] Irwin concludes that Fielding is essentially a "popularizer" of basic moral truths ("like Steele, Addison, Pope, and many another"), and has therefore nothing particularly original or profound to communicate. This is only a step or so above Andrew Wright's criticism that Wild is a simplistic moral "tract" (see above, p. 2). More complicated is Allan Wendt's interpretation of Wild as an "ethical allegory." Though superficially it seems as simple as "a medieval morality play, in which Wickedness meets its downfall and Goodness triumphs," Wendt argues

(quite convincingly) that Fielding's "tale" is meant to illustrate "the limitations of Heartfree's passive goodness as well as . . . the evil of Wild's immoderate greatness."[8] The ethical lessons are thus relatively complex, and Fielding should be given credit for the way he develops them. Still, Irwin's observation that Fielding was not an original or radical philosopher is true since, as Wendt takes care to explain, Fielding's definitions of "greatness" ("a good head" combined with unrestrained vanity and ambition) and "goodness" ("a good heart" unguided by judgment or self-interest) are directly related to Shaftesbury's theory concerning the need to balance the selfish and social passions.

Interestingly, those who concentrate on Jonathan Wild's moral message tend to judge the book's structure from a "dramatic" aspect, and to place great emphasis on the characterization of Wild and Heartfree. Irwin believes that Wild's structure is dominated by the dramatic conflict between Wild and Heartfree, which (he feels) forms the substance of Books Two, Three, and Four.[9] Wendt himself treats Wild as a "tale," and argues that Heartfree is a carefully created, consistent character. Similarly, C. J. Rawson argues that readers have overlooked the "action" of Wild, and the true "character" of Wild himself as it emerges from that action.[10]

Rawson's main point is that Wild's character is essentially comic, having much in common with picaresque heroes. For example, Wild is a "clown" in several episodes involving Laetitia and is incompetent at safeguarding the stolen Heartfree jewels. At the same time, Rawson feels that Fielding intended to condemn Wild's more villainous actions in episodes which are not comic but rather "burlesque" (i.e., depicting the 'monstrous and unnatural'). These two attitudes conflict and the comic view (even if it is at times black humour) wins:

> . . . Wild is both arch-villain and childish prankster. . . . in spite of its author, vice and folly have become play, a type of play which in its absurd vigour and integrity emancipates us from the values of virtue and sense which we are officially invited to apply.[11]

Rawson enjoys Wild for its "primary gusto, and . . . [its] element of emancipation from, or transcendence of, satire" --as if satire were a dispirited and imprisoning form.

By stressing the 'playful' aspects of Wild (which he classifies as a "novel"), Rawson seems to be trying to resurrect Fielding according to the standards of Leavis and others, who demand that prose fiction be a 'celebration' of life. But there is no sound basis within Wild itself or within the contemporary theory and practice of serious fiction upon which Wild is founded, to justify such critical

expectations of a strong consistency of tone or character. As was noted earlier, Dryden demands only one sort of unity from satire: a unity of theme (i.e., moral purpose). Though he distinguishes between the 'manners' of Juvenal and Horace, Dryden nowhere declares that a work must be either consistently Horatian or Juvenalian, and eighteenth-century satire is accordingly changeable in tone. Nevertheless, critics persist in their pigeonholing effort. Ronald Paulson, like Rawson, is anxious to prove that the character Wild is not really a villain:

> He is . . . the little man deceived by the ideal of greatness. . . . Fashion, in the sense of copying someone else's crimes, seems to be at the root of folly in Fielding's early satire.[12]

Paulson concludes that Wild is not a hypocrite, but is only vain; therefore, he is not a Juvenalian, but rather an Horatian villain.

Surely it is true that Wild is often made a fool or "clown" and that he is sometimes only a "little man" following "Fashion." An example of the latter is his love letter to Laetitia, an amusingly illiterate attempt at fine writing with which Fielding satirizes "the Beaus of our Time" (Wild, III, 6). But this is not all that Wild represents. Wild does in many scenes represent the real criminal Jonathan Wild as well as the "Great Men" of history or politics, and his actions in these cases qualify him as

more of a villain than a fool. Wild seems thoughtlessly ruthless when having insubordinate members of his gang, such as Mr. Marybone, hanged (III, 3), yet he is shown to suffer from his conscience when Heartfree is nearly hanged by his efforts (IV, 3). Despite his conscience, however, Wild consistently and deliberately deceives others for his own ends; for example, when he visits Heartfree at Newgate, Wild carefully 'conceals' various important details concerning his deception of Mrs. Heartfree (III, 5). In fact, Wild is said to come as close to perfect "Daemonism" as is humanly possible (I, 1), and a 'demonic' character in satire is by definition the most blameworthy, since he is the most "completely conscious" of his deeds.[13] Hence one should expect Fielding's 'ridicule' of the "Great Man" to be more satiric (whether Horatian or Juvenalian) than comic.

Again, to conceive of Wild as a 'character' is quite incorrect, since his role in this satire of Fielding's is a highly flexible one. In numerous scenes, Wild himself is not the main object of attention or ridicule, but serves instead as a foil to illustrate the vanity or hypocrisy of others. A notable example is the ironic interview between Wild and a corrupt clergyman, the Ordinary of Newgate (IV, 14). Wild may represent Jonathan Wild, Robert Walpole, the Earl of Wilmington, Caesar or Charles XII, a London beau, a hero of Romance, or only a foil for the vices of others, without

violating the artistic demands of satire.

In his role as a "Great Man," Wild is pre-eminently a 'flat' character, but for good reason. As a hypocrite, he is always scrupulous regarding his outward conduct, and successfully manipulates others due to his exterior bravery and integrity: "that steady Countenance in which he was superior to all Mankind" (Wild, III, 5). Repeatedly the narrator refers to Wild as a great "Figure" (III, 3), and truly he is more of a "figure" than a character or a personality. In the sense that "figure" may mean "face," and "countenance" is synonymous with "face," a Great Man may be said to 'cut a brilliant figure' because he 'has the face' (i.e., is shameless enough) to succeed. By his repetition of such terms, Fielding seems well aware of their metaphorical aptness. Another sense in which Wild is a "figure" rather than a character is indicated in the description of English politics as a puppet-show (III, 11). The main theme of this description is that Great Men are largely invisible, their actions concealed behind curtains as they manipulate their underlings on "the stage of the World." As it stands, this analogy may not particularly impress the reader, but the narrator's extension of the analogy should, because it implicates the reader as a partner in corruption:

> . . . [the audience of England's political "Farces"] are in the same Situation with the Readers of Romances; who, though they know the whole to be one entire Fiction, nevertheless agree to be deceived. . . . (Wild, III, 11)

As will be demonstrated later, Jonathan Wild is in many respects a mock-romance; hence the reader of Wild himself is being satirized here. But another point to be noticed is the implied analogy between "Romance"-writers and Great Men--both are puppet-masters. The Great Man has his own "well-drest Figures" or puppets, but ultimately he is himself a puppet or tool of the unscrupulous historian or biographer--he is what the historian makes him. As puppeteer or puppet, then, Wild is only a shadowy "Figure."

Before leaving the question of characterization, one should perhaps consider the place of Heartfree in the "greatness"-"goodness" framework of Wild, if only because some of the dissatisfaction with Jonathan Wild stems from the 'failure' of Heartfree as a character or allegorical symbol. It has been suggested that Heartfree is simply a pale precursor of Parson Adams in Joseph Andrews, or that Wild and Heartfree were only fully realized later as Blifil and Tom in Tom Jones,[14] but this is a judgment based on novel-standards of character. Rawson believes that the "moral dignity" of Heartfree and his family is intended to be taken "entirely seriously," despite the fact that

Fielding could not sustain this and subconsciously undermined Heartfree as a good character. Rawson speculates that "as a somewhat passively virtuous person and as a mere tradesman, Heartfree was someone whom Fielding found it easier to sentimentalize than to respect"; but that despite this Heartfree is not morally imperfect.[15]

Allan Wendt, with whom Rawson disagrees, argues instead that Heartfree is consciously criticized by Fielding for his "passive" and imprudent goodness (see above, pp. 21-22), and that Heartfree is a well-conceived, consistent character. In general, Wendt gives plansible interpretations of passages which seem to ironically undercut the folly or vanity of the Heartfrees, though his artistic justification for the 'happy ending' of Wild seems perhaps a bit too ingenious and speculative:

> Heartfree achieves success at the end of Jonathan Wild only because Wild's hanging, in allegorical terms, marks the destruction of evil, and the creation of the perfect society in which Heartfree's goodness is practicable.[16]

Wendt himself argues--very plausibly--that the narrator's final comments concerning the Heartfrees may be suspected of ironic criticism or innuendo. If this is correct, then the sincerity of the happy ending is questionable:

> . . . [Heartfree] hath, by Industry joined with Parsimony, amassed an immense Fortune. His wife and he are now grown old in the purest Love and Friendship; but

never had another child. (Wild, IV, 16)

Rawson makes the point that one obstacle to properly judging Heartfree is the reader's advantage in knowing what Wild's motives actually are. In other words, Heartfree is hurt by the dramatic irony of his situation. This is an excellent point, but one which Fielding seems to have realized when he revised Jonathan Wild shortly before his death in 1753. Dudden notices that most of Fielding's substantial revisions for the edition of 1754 deal with the Wild-Heartfree encounters.[17] Often Fielding attempts to extenuate Heartfree's errors; for example, in the reference to their boyhood days when Heartfree let Wild take the rap for his own misdeeds (II, 1).

Despite these revisions of Heartfree's image, however, numerous passages remain which seem unquestionably to satirize the Heartfrees' excesses, especially their moral complacency. Mrs. Heartfree frequently prides herself on "the Disposition of Providence in [her] Favour," and this assurance leads her to remain callously inactive in the face of the struggles of others. The Count is abandoned to wallow in his own blood by Mrs. Heartfree and the Hermit, after the Hermit rescues her from the Count's wicked (i.e. sexual) attack (IV, 10). The details of the Count's struggles are in fact made more vivid in Fielding's 1754 version of Mrs.

Heartfree's comment: "We left the Villain weltering in his Blood, tho' beginning to recover a little Motion. . . ." (IV, 10). One cannot help noticing Mrs. Heartfree's anxiety for preserving her virtue and recovering the jewels stolen by the Count; after these goals are achieved, the Count may be damned. A similar callousness is evident in her subsequent behaviour toward the Hermit. She "innocently" helps the sailors who save her from the Hermit's advances to pilfer his cherished bottle of brandy, regretting only that she is not offered a taste of it herself (IV, 12). Heartfree's complacence is most evident in his second Newgate interview with Wild (III, 10). Enraged by Wild's invitation to join him in robbery, Heartfree declares that he lacks "even a Shadow" of the baseness necessary for such an undertaking, and that he has promised himself never to injure any person "FROM ANY MOTIVE OR ON ANY CONSIDERATION WHATEVER." He then basks in the thought of the rewards awaiting him:

> For surely no Man can reap a Benefit from my pursuing . . . [this rule] equal to the Comfort I myself enjoy: For what a ravishing Thought! how replete with Exstasy [sic] must the Consideration be, that the Goodness of God is engaged to reward me! How indifferent must such a Persuasion make a Man to all the Occurrences of this Life! (III, 10)

There is a nice unconscious irony in the first sentence of this passage: Heartfree's policy would benefit him more than

the rest of society; this reflects Fielding's belief that good-nature or benevolence becomes foolish if it is aimed at the worthy and unworthy alike. However, Heartfree's actual willingness to slight others manifests itself immediately as he cuts Wild down: "Dost thou think then, thou little, paltry, mean Animal . . . that I will forego such comfortable Expectations . . . for that sordid Lucre. . . .?" (III, 10). Later, when a cruel Constable tears one of Heartfree's children away from him, Heartfree forgets his stoicism and dashes the fellow's head against the wall (III, 12).

In his inconsistency, Heartfree is similar to Parson Adams, more vain than hypocritical. But it is clear that Fielding is serious in satirizing the Heartfrees' pride, and that his criticism is not mainly due to their merchant-class status, as Rawson believes. The Heartfrees, like Wild, are not meant to be strictly consistent characters, but assume several roles depending on Fielding's satiric purposes. The narrator's final comment on the Heartfree family indicates that they represent overly passive, smugly pious members of religious sects like the Quakers, regardless of social class. The whole extended family of Heartfrees live together in one house (virtually isolated from the rest of society) ". . . with such Amity and Affection towards each other, that they are in the Neighbourhood called the Family of Love" (IV, 16). In addition, Mrs. Heartfree in her travel

adventures in many ways resembles Richardson's Pamela or other heroines of "Romance," and at times Heartfree seems to represent Fielding himself. This is evident in one of Heartfree's soliloquies, which follows the news that his wife has fled the country with Wild (III, 2). Here Heartfree seems to function primarily as a mouthpiece for Fielding's views on the deceptive and fleeting nature of happiness, the need for stoic control, and the folly of worldly concerns. The soliloquy is essentially an essay paraphrasing earlier ones by Fielding in The Champion[18] (1739-40), except for a phrase or two which strongly undercut the straight and serious tone of the whole:

> ' The Delights of most Men are as childish and as superficial as that of my little Girl. . . . But let us survey those whose Understandings are of a more elevated and refined Temper, how empty do they soon find the World of Enjoyments worth their Desire or attaining! How soon do they retreat to Solitude and Contemplation, to Gardening and Planting, and such rural Amusements, where their Trees and they enjoy the Air and Sun in common, and both vegetate with very little Difference between them. . . .' (III, 2)

Despite his essential belief in these ideals, Fielding is unable to avoid satirizing the image of the 'vegetating' good man, and therefore satirizing his own writings as a philosopher in The Champion.

As these examples illustrate, a fair critical assessment of the 'characters' in Jonathan Wild must be

based on the understanding that satire does not require complete or consistent character development. Rawson's conception of Wild and Heartfree seems distorted because he tries to read Wild as a novel; Wendt, on the other hand, overlooks many dimensions of both Heartfree and Wild because he reads Wild as an allegory. But Wild belongs to a more flexible genre than either of these. The characters in Jonathan Wild, like Fielding's 'characters' in general, are really only satiric or essayistic devices which serve various functions as the satirist sees fit.

Much more important than the 'conflict' between Heartfree and Wild is the interaction which occurs between the narrator and reader of Wild. Two of the most perceptive Fielding critics, Ronald Paulson and Henry Knight Miller, have commented on the special importance of the narrator-reader relationship in Fielding's other works. As Paulson explains, Fielding

> . . . remains throughout his career more concerned with the problem of understanding, of fixing meaning, than with the problem of conveying the sense of felt reality—with the reader's, as opposed to his character's, understanding.[19]

The similarity between this statement and Dryden's rule that the satirist should teach his readers to question thoroughly their own conceptions, opinions, and motives (see above, pp. 9-10) is worth noting. Paulson stresses the importance

of the "various poses" which a Fielding narrator assumes as a means to stimulate the reader. Miller, on the other hand, stresses the numerous roles which the reader himself is expected to participate in, according to the narrator's explicit and implicit application of adjectives such as 'learned,' 'youthful,' 'female,' 'prophane,' 'grave,' and so on to his "Reader."[20]

In Jonathan Wild, the range of roles projected onto the reader is smaller than in Tom Jones (to which Miller specifically refers), but the kind of effect which Miller describes is still evident. That is, the reader is drawn into active participation in the judgment of the characters', narrator's, and his own motives. In Wild, the narrator often addresses his reader in exceedingly polite terms: "And now, Reader, if thou pleasest, as we are in no great Haste, we will stop and make a Simile . . ." (I, 14). From one point of view, the narrator in such instances is perversely coy, since he will proceed in his silly digression whether the reader actually "pleases" or not. However, it may be just as valid to read such a statement as if it were not ironic--as if Fielding intends his reader to realize the actual truth of the cliché, "if thou pleasest." What appears at first to be a criticism of verbose and pretentious writers becomes instead, if one reads closely, a criticism of the poor taste of most readers, which is what

allows poor writers to flourish at all. The reader is thus more to blame. Throughout Jonathan Wild the narrator consistently assumes that his readers share his own prejudices. In effect, the reader is subtly insulted, because the narrator can so blithely read his mind:

> This was so cruel a Disappointment to Wild, and so sensibly affects us, as no doubt it will the Reader; that . . . we will now take a little Breath; and therefore we shall here close this Book. (I, 14) (my emphasis)

> But we must not detain our Reader too long with these low stories. He is doubtless as impatient as the Audience at the Theatre, till the principal Figure returns on the stage. . . . (III, 3) (my emphasis)

Here the royal "we" of the narrator gains a special significance, as it clearly serves to implicate the reader (". . . we [the narrator and reader] will now take a little Breath . . .") in the crimes of romantic literature and heroic biography.

Despite the strong criticism directed at his readers' tastes, Fielding's satire in this respect is no more 'angry' or 'grim' than it is elsewhere. This is evident in an apology which follows the description of an emotional scene between Mrs. Heartfree and her children:

> These are Circumstances which we should not, for the Amusement of six or seven Readers only, have inserted, had they not served to show, that there are Weaknesses in vulgar Life, which are commonly called

> Tenderness. . . . (II, 9)

It would be possible to call such a passage bitter, were it not for the incongruously specific (and therefore amusing) exaggeration of the phrase, ". . . six or seven Readers." Such touches are common in Wild, and are integral to the general satiric tone--it is not a case of the 'genial' Fielding intruding into an otherwise harsh diatribe.

This is not to say that the narrative voice is unvarying. George Levine attempts to prove that the narrator of Wild (which he calls a "novel") is not a true "persona" (that is, a narrator who "embodies the specific vice, human foible, or stereotypic attitude" being exposed), but is Fielding himself: ". . . Fielding assumes an ironic pose but speaks always in his own voice."[21] But surely one can argue that no author could 'assume an ironic pose' and still speak 'in his own voice.' In fact, the narrative voice in Wild may more accurately be described according to Paulson's comments about Swiftian personae:

> It is significant that . . . [Fielding] thought of Swift himself as the ironist in A Modest Proposal, the Lucianic rhetorician who assumes various poses without losing his own identity.[22]

The distinction between authorial "identity" and authorial "voice" is crucial because, although the 'voice' in Wild is quite changeable, there is an underlying unity of intention which gives it artistic coherence.

The most distinct shifts in narrative voice tend to involve a change in narrative pronoun from "we" to "I." For example, the digression which follows the account of Wild's marriage to Laetitia is more straightforward in its satire, and more informal in voice:

> Most Histories as well as Comedies end at this Period; the Historian and the Poet both concluding they have done enough for their Hero when they have married him; or intimating rather, that the rest of his Life must be a dull Calm of Happiness, very delightful indeed to pass through, but somewhat insipid to relate: And Matrimony in general must, I believe, without any Dispute, be allowed to be this State of tranquil Felicity, so little concerned with Variety, that, like Salisbury Plain, it affords only one Prospect, a very pleasant one it must be confest, but the same. (III, 7)

Because this passage is consistent with the narrator's general style, one does not feel that Fielding is intruding into the narration. In fact, Fielding himself never drops his narrative mask to speak directly. When the first-person singular is used, the point is more forcefully made, because the narrator appears to be confessing his private emotions or opinions. However, the satire still depends on an ironic reading:

> For my part, I own myself of that humble kind of Mortals who consider themselves born for the behalf of some GREAT Man or other . . . But when I behold one GREAT MAN starving with Hunger and freezing with Cold in the Midst of fifty thousand . . . when I consider whole

> Nations extirpated only to bring Tears into the Eyes of a GREAT MAN, that he hath no more Nations to extirpate, then I am almost inclined to wish that Nature had spared us this her MASTERPIECE. . . . (I, 14)

The character of the narrator, and the relationship between the narrator and the reader, are features which have been largely overlooked in discussions of the theme and structure of Wild. A number of critics have recognized that part of the book's satire is directed against the narrator himself, as a representative hack biographer:

> Jonathan Wild is a highly complex satire which strikes simultaneously at faction and self-seeking in politics, at flattery and sensationalism in biography, and at duplicity and inhumanity in society.[23]

However, much more has been written about the political and social satire--the attacks on Walpole and other contemporary political figures, and the exposure of the private and social morality of the petty criminal world (represented by Wild and his gang), of the middle classes (represented by the Heartfrees), and of the upper classes (the pretensions of Laetitia; the marriage settlement and quarrels involving Wild and Laetitia)--than about the fundamental satirical theme which actually sustains Wild and gives it coherence. For the satire in Wild is primarily literary and linguistic in substance. And it is here that Fielding's genius is evident.

The narrator of Wild is consistently a target of irony or satire, since he represents the panegyrical biographers of 'Great Men.' Wild is profuse with comments by the narrator concerning history and biography in general, the purposes and design of the history he is presenting to us, and the probable expectations of the reader of a work of this kind. For example, the book begins with a short essay on the purpose and lessons of biography, with a discussion of the "Errors of Opinion" which readers have contracted because most biographers have not properly distinguished between the qualities "Greatness" and "Goodness" (I, 1). To begin a biography with such a discourse on biography itself is certainly common eighteenth-century practice [for example, Johnson in his Life of Richard Savage (1744)]; however, Jonathan Wild is remarkable because throughout the book the function of the writer and the tastes of the reader of biography are kept in the foreground. The reader is not allowed to forget that the direction of the work he is reading depends on the writer's interpretation of his genre. As a result, the reader is induced to question the writer's motives and his own motives at least as much as those of Wild or Heartfree or the other characters or contemporary persons represented.

The vices of Jonathan Wild's narrator are primarily

linguistic in nature, and they may be illuminated by a comparison with the language used in one of Fielding's models, Defoe's True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild.[24] Like the narrator of Wild, the narrator of this account stresses his devotion to historical objectivity and accuracy. He assures the reader that his sources are entirely reliable; that his account rests on "Materials from [Wild's] own Mouth . . . and others fully conversant with him . . . ," rather than accepting reports "upon the Credit of Common Fame" (272-73). Other accounts are criticized for their levity and closer resemblance to "Romance" than biography: "It is something strange, that a Man's Life should be made a kind of a Romance before his Face . . ." (271). Despite these disclaimers, however, and despite the reputation his account has as the most accurate of the biographies of the real Jonathan Wild, Defoe's Life of Wild is inconsistent in a number of respects. The narrator seems to disregard his own comments about "Romance," by casting much of his history in romantic terms. For example, he refers to streetwalkers as "ladies," robberies as "adventures," and hireling thieves as "poor Adventurers" (279). There is also a tone of hyperbole present throughout this biography which is reminiscent of Fielding's narrator's heavy reliance on intensifiers like "wonderful," "astonishing," "admirable," and "surprising."

For example, Defoe's narrator contends that his short account, though it contains only a few incidents from Wild's life, is nevertheless typical of Wild's behaviour:

> NOT that it is possible to obtain a full Account of all the particular Villainies of Jonathan Wild, during a series of sixteen Years, in which he reign'd in all his Wickedness with such Success, as no Age can produce the like. (273)

Defoe's Wild, despite his "Wickedness," is given heroic proportion, due to the sheer enormity of his crimes. In this he is like Fielding's Wild, whose "Greatness" is a measure of size, not quality.

In his selection of incidents and in his relation of them, the narrator of Defoe's Life of Wild consistently shows a tendency toward sensationalism which seems at variance with his professed desire to present a fair and sober account. For example, he declines to give an account of how Wild separated from his first "Instructor," the prostitute Mary Milliner, because "HOW he and his Lady parted . . . is a Story, which has nothing Extraordinary in it . . ." (278). The habit of mind which is suggested by the narrator's (and presumably the reader's) primary interest in "Extraordinary" events would seem to be related to the satirical emphasis in Fielding's Wild on the "wonderful" and the "surprising." In the heading to the tenth chapter of the first book ("A Discovery of some Matters concerning the

chaste Laetitia, which must wonderfully surprize, and perhaps affect our Reader"), Fielding seems to be commenting in a subtle but clever way on the tastes of the reader of rogue biographies or romances. The suggested distinction between the reader who is only "surprized" and the reader who is actually "affected" by what he reads is a telling one.

The hyperbole or sensationalism in Defoe's Life of Wild is also evident in several rather curious metaphors. For example, the narrator describes Wild's position as a middle-man between thieves and the Law:

> IT must be allow'd to Jonathan's Fame, That as he steer'd among Rocks and dangerous Shoals, so he was a bold Pilot; he ventur'd in, and always got out in a manner equally surprising; no Man ever did the like before him, and I dare say, no Man will attempt to do the like after him. . . . (287)

It is quite difficult to determine from context whether this is a serious attempt at what Fielding might call "fine writing," or whether Defoe means to satirize Wild with mock-heroic or mock-romantic hyperbole. It is possible to read the final part of this statement sarcastically (". . . I dare say, no Man will attempt to do the like after him . . ."). This problem of tone extends to two other metaphors which Defoe's narrator continuously applies to the world of thieves. One of these equates the gangs, or

"Societies" of thieves with acting companies, whose routines Wild had studied so that

> in a little time he knew all their several Employments, and the several Parts they Acted, their Haunts and their Walks, how they perform'd, and how they manag'd their Effects when they had met with Success: And . . . he seem'd to set up for a Director to them. . . . (278)

In keeping with this concept, Wild's hanging is referred to as his "Exit" from the "Stage."

The other metaphor, whose overall influence on the tone of the narrative is somewhat greater, equates thieving with business, with Wild the dextrous "manager" of a thriving "Trade" (278-79). The persons acting under Wild's direction are referred to as "Instruments" (280), a term which reminds one of Fielding's Wild, where much is made of the "Tools" or "Hands" employed by Great Men for their own gain. Fielding, speaking through Wild, equates merchants with "Conquerors, absolute Princes, Prime Ministers, and Prigs [thieves]" insofar as their self-esteem is based on a similar criterion: ". . . for thus one Merchant says he is greater than another, because he employs more Hands" (I, 14). However, Fielding goes on to distinguish merchants from truly Great Men, since the hands employed by merchants labor also for the benefit of society, while a Great Man's employees labor only for him; hence the Great Man's power is greater.

Defoe's "Trade" metaphor has some basis in Wild's own approach to his work: "HE openly kept his Compting House, or Office, like a Man of Business, and had his Books to enter every thing in with the utmost Exactness and Regularity . . ." (291), and perhaps both the trade metaphor and the stage metaphor were primarily recorded by Defoe to impart a flavour of underworld cant or Wild's own euphemistic description of his operations, since Defoe's Life purports to be "taken from . . . [Wild's] Own Mouth, and collected from PAPERS of his Own Writing" (270). Unfortunately, the narrator tends to use both metaphors without qualification or obvious irony, which has the effect of dignifying the profession of thieving. Both metaphors are implicit; that is, the nature or intention of the analogy involved is never indicated explicitly, as it is in Fielding's comparison of Wild with merchants, or indeed, in Fielding's comparison of Wild with the master of a puppet show or drama (III, 11). Fielding's tendency to use simile rather than metaphor, to mock the careless use of similes in "fine writing," and to make his own similes blatantly obvious, is well known. One may perhaps understand Fielding's distrust of metaphor better by noting how the looser use of metaphor in Defoe's biography can blur important philosophical or ethical distinctions.[25]

There are damaging inconsistencies of tone or style as well in Defoe's Life of Wild. Some of the narrator's comments can be read as ironic understatement; for example:

> . . . even this good Character of his, as it did not last long, so neither did it come all at once; and some tell us (how true it is, I will not affirm) that [Wild] was oblig'd to give up every now and then one or two of his Clients to the Gallows, to support his rising Reputation. . . . (284)

Elsewhere, he is amusingly sarcastic, in a style which obviously influenced Fielding: ". . . as [Wild] was of a pushing, enterprising Nature, he could content himself with nothing but everthing he could get, nor could he act moderately in any part of his Conduct" (288). The effect of these passages, hoever, is diluted by the curiously ambiguous stance toward Wild which Defoe's narrator takes from the beginning:

> The Life of Jonathan Wild is a perfectly new Scene; as his Conduct has been Inimitable, so his Imployment has been singular to him, and is like to be so, for as it began, so it is like to dye with him; no Man among the most daring of the Clan being, we believe, so hardy as to venture to take it up after him.
>
> Every Step he took was Criminal, and the very Actions which he did with the greatest openness and an avowed profess'd Allowance, merited the Gallows even by the very Letter. . . . (272)

The straight condemnation of Wild competes oddly with the implicit admiration of Wild's daring which precedes it. Even harsher is the contrast created by the outbursts of

invective which occur later in the narrative, when Wild's practice of leading young impoverished boys into the "trade," then betraying them to legal authorities, is discussed:

> Horrid Wickedness! his Charity has been to breed them up to be Thieves, and still more Horrid! several of these his own forster Children [sic]. . . .(301)

The inconsistencies in Defoe's Life of Wild may be the result of hurried composition, editorial ghost-writing, or simply the inherent ambiguity involved in rogue biography, which was meant to please the public as well as to fulfill an obligation to impart moral lessons. A close reading of Deofe's Life indicates that Defoe probably intended his readers to read the earlier sections ironically, and the latter portions as straight criticism, but a more cursory reading (the kind which most readers would give) yields an impossible confusion of attitudes toward Wild's activities. By contrast, Fielding's care to maintain a stricter consistency of style and tone is Jonathan Wild is very evident. That one of Fielding's conscious purposes in Wild is to satirize Defoe's Life of Wild seems clear from Fielding's Preface to his Miscellanies:

> . . . my Design is not to enter the Lists with that excellent Historian, who from authentic Papers and Records, &c. hath already given so satisfactory an Account of the Life and Actions of this Great Man. I have not indeed the least Intention to depreciate the Veracity and Impartiality

of that History. . . .[26]

Here Fielding seems to praise Defoe's account, but there are several indicators which suggest that the entire paragraph involved is meant to be read ironically. First, there is Fielding's reference to Wild as "this Great Man," an irony which colours the whole of the sentence in which it occurs. Second, one's suspicion is aroused by the attention focussed on the repeated disclaimer ("I have not indeed the least Intention to depreciate . . .). Finally, Fielding refers in this same paragraph to the various accounts concerning Wild's death which appeared "in certain Chronicles called Newspapers, the Authority of which hath been sometimes questioned. . . ."[27] The sarcasm of the mock-dignifier "Chronicles" and the understated criticism of the "Authority" of the popular press seem certainly meant to reflect on the whole tone of the paragraph.

Of course, there is more to the literary satire in Fielding's Wild than its occasional parody of or allusion to Defoe or the other biographers of the real Jonathan Wild. One of Fielding's obvious targets is the romance, with its bombast and false modesty. The narrator, though continually reminding us of his adherence to the "fidelity" of history, deals often in coy insinuation and innuendo; for example, when he hints at the true nature of the intimacy between Laetitia and Tom Smirk. Laetitia can no longer be properly

described as "chaste" but only as "fair," as she has granted "every Familiarity" to Smirk, making him "as happy as Wild desired to be" (I, 10). Elsewhere, the 'fine writing' of Romance is obviously at issue:

> Mr. Snap had by his Second Lady two Daughters, who were now in the Bloom of their Youth and Beauty. These young Ladies, like Damsels in Romance, compassionated the captive Count, and endeavoured by all Means to make his Confinement less irksome to him. . . . (I,4)

Aside from the obvious romantic vocabulary (e.g., "Damsels," "Ladies"), one notes the straining for alliteration ("compassionated the captive Count"). The irony of this passage involves not only the obvious gap between the subject matter and the mock-heroic style, but also some rather clever sexual innuendo on Fielding's part. The main point here, though, is the narrator's continual reference to romance, despite his insistence that he is writing a history.

Elsewhere the satire involves the nature of history and biography, and the expectations of the reader. The narrator frequently explains that he is "obliged" to structure his history in certain ways, as though he were highly aware of historical conventions. Chapter seven of Book One, which purports to describe young Wild's "Travels" in America, is an example of the narrator's lip service to "the general

Method of Historians," who feel obliged to include lengthy accounts of all their subjects' adventures, whether or not there is anything worthwhile to relate (I, 7). In the first paragraph of this chapter, the narrator explains why he is unable to give his reader an account of the "Accident" which interrupted Wild's career as a "pretty Gentleman" about town, causing his father (a sort of under-sheriff) to send him to America for seven years. From the end of the preceding chapter, of course, we may guess that Wild was forced to flee after getting into trouble one of the "young Ladies" who had "spread their Charms for him" (I, 6), or perhaps that Wild had been 'transported' for some unspecified crime (as seven years was a common period of sentence for transported criminals). The narrator's rationale for not discussing this "Accident" seems, on the surface, to be a laudable one: there are such various accounts of what happened, and the truth of these accounts is so questionable, that he has decided not to relate any of them. He thus represents himself as being more concerned with the truth than other historians, "who in such Cases set down the various Reports, and leave to . . . [the reader's] own Conjecture which you will chuse" (I, 7). At the same time, the narrator is really insulting the reader, by not allowing him to assess the various accounts and apply his judgment to determine which one is more plausible. The

narrator has teased the reader's curiosity by mentioning Wild's "Accident" at all, since he is unwilling to "indulge" that curiosity by giving any details. The reader may feel cheated when he reaches the final sentence, where the narrator summarizes the chapter's content:

> . . . we content ourselves with setting down our Hero where we took him up, after acquainting our Reader that he went abroad, staid seven Years, and then came home again. (I, 7)

But again, the reader might have to ask himself just why he would prefer to be given all the details of Wild's "Accident" or "Tra-vels," or why he allows himself to be concerned with this empty chapter at all.

Although this chapter allows Fielding to satirize the genteel custom of a 'grand tour' through Europe, which is in many cases no more edifying than Wild's supposed experiences in America, being "a continued Scene of whoring, drinking, and removing from one Place to another" (I, 7), the main point of the chapter is its literary satire on biographers (including the narrator), on those who read biographies (including the reader of Wild), and also on the vices of travel accounts in general. Similarly, the chapter recounting Wild's "miraculous" escape from the sea (II, 13), though it reinforces important features of Wild's character, seems primarily intended to provide an occasion for Fielding, through the narrator, to comment on the use by

other writers of 'supernatural agents.'[28] This chapter is an excellent example of Fielding's ability to kill two or three satiric birds with one stone, as he manages also to include some sharp criticism of the notion that Great Men are created by Fate, rather than by their own abilities. Elsewhere, though, the narrator's numerous digressions and general verbosity serve little purpose in relation to Wild's character or the political satire of the book as a whole, but serve to reinforce the satire on biographers.

William Irwin, in a brief review of Fielding's work prior to Jonathan Wild, notes that one of Fielding's major targets was "literary folly"; that is, ignorance, affectation, and pedantry among all members of the theatrical and literary world (actors, dramatists, critics, theatre-goers, book-sellers, theatrical managers, authors, readers, and scholars). According to Irwin, Fielding's "Scriblerean burlesque of false learning" consists of three devices: a "Burlesque representation of uncouth grammar, spelling, syntax, and diction"; "comic etymology" (for example, deriving "'honesty' from Green 'Honos,' an ass"); and elaborate burlesques of "meaningless critical apparatus" including "introductory dissertations," footnotes, and so on.[29] The devices which Irwin points to are of course quite obvious ones, and are particularly well-developed in Fielding's play, Tom Thumb. Certainly these devices are also

present in Jonathan Wild; for example, the parody of ignorant writing in Wild's letter to Laetitia (III, 6). Irwin does not consider literary satire to be a major concern in Jonathan Wild, apart from the early chapters which obviously parody the rogue biographies of the period. However, the literary satire in Wild is certainly more pervasive and more significant than this.

As has been demonstrated, the Romance is as much parodied in Wild as is the rogue biography, and particularly important is the criticism of the readers of Romance. Like the public observing the performance of a Great Man, "the Readers of Romance . . . though they know the whole to be one entire Fiction, nevertheless agree to be deceived . . ." (III, 11). Though this apparently casual comment might be overlooked by an insensitive reader, a reader who has noticed the numerous resemblances between this "History" of Wild and the "Romance," not only in diction but in the preoccupation with adventure for its own sake and in the mock-heroic elevation of characters and incidents, must feel the significance of this analogy between the credulous romance reader and the credulous mob. As if to demonstrate the obvious fictionality of the book, the very next chapter is opened in a very mechanical way: "To return to my History, which, having rested itself a little, is now ready to proceed on its Journey . . ." (III, 12). To the extent

that a reader is absorbed in the narration which follows this kind of shameless manipulation, and to the extent that he enjoys the most blatantly fictional elements of Jonathan Wild (such as the exaggerated descriptions in Mrs. Heartfree's travel account); to that extent might he comply with the 'demonic' machinations of Great Men, if the narrator's analogy is valid.

In addition, the vices of the serious biographer-historian constitute important targets. The crime of flattery is hit in the narrator's ironic apology for Wild's want of skill in spelling. Great Men should not be criticized for their failure at composition, or the use of language in general,

> . . . for if these sort of GREAT Personages can but complot and contrive their noble Schemes, and hack and hew Mankind sufficiently, there will never be wanting fit and able Persons who can spell, to record their Praises. (III, 6)

Despite the humour of this statement, the point made is a very serious one, for corrupt historians and journalists tend to 'embellish' the speeches of Great Men with "Rhetorical Flowers" of their own invention, giving a false impression of the Great Men's eloquence. The narrator of Wild justifies this practice, but Fielding's intention is obviously ironic:

> . . . it is sufficient if in these the Historian adheres faithfully to the

> Matter, though he embellishes the Diction with some Flourishes of his own Eloquence, without which the excellent Speeches recorded in ancient Historians (particularly in Sallust) would have scarce been found in their Writings.[30] (III, 6)

In fact, Fielding seems more intent on satirizing incompetent or corrupt biographers than satirizing "Great Men" themselves, despite the numerous satiric references to Walpole, Alexander, and others.[31] The abuse of language and learning is in a way worse than the abuse of political power; that is, in Fielding's terms, "Greatness" (the everlasting fame or reputation which certain notorious villains have acquired in history), is a more vicious thing than what the narrator defines as "Greatness" (the actual amount of misery which Great Men inflict on the masses in their own time).[32] By celebrating great (i.e. outrageous) tyrants or criminals, the biographer or historian is potentially more destructive than the man he celebrates, as he influences more people through his writing.[33] It is significant that the real Jonathan Wild was himself an example of the influence of historians on credulous readers. As Gerald Howson quotes from the Ordinary of Newgate's account of Wild's last days:

> 'The Evening before he suffered, he enquir'd how the noble Greeks and Romans, who slew themselves, came to be so glorious in History, if self-murder be a Crime?'[34]

In the end, the historian's words are more powerful, and more likely to deceive, than any tyrant's deeds. Hence, Fielding is preoccupied in Wild with the rhetorical style of uncritical historians and biographers, with their abuse of language, and with the connection between good judgment and a careful attention to words. He repeatedly calls the reader's attention to words, as arbitrary symbols whose tenuous relationship to our notions of truth must be recognized. Like Dryden, Fielding seems concerned that his reader learn to distinguish "betwixt our conceptions of things [as concepts inhere in words], and things themselves."[35] The most fruitful reading of Wild is one which pays particular attention, not to the political or social satire, nor to the character of Wild or Heartfree, nor to the plot structure, but rather to Fielding's constant, careful manipulation of the narrator's and characters' language.

Chapter Three: Structure, Satiric Vocabulary, and the Theme of "Greatness"

Just as there is debate over the main targets of satire in *Wild*, there is considerable debate concerning the nature of the book's structure and the relationship between this structure and what appear to be Fielding's major themes. As has been demonstrated with reference to Defoe's *Life of Wild*, Fielding's *Wild* is to some extent a parody of the rogue biography, and Irwin and Dudden have attempted to assess *Wild's* structure on this basis. Irwin feels that there is a pronounced break between the "biographical structure" of Book I and the "dramatic structure" ("dramatic" because of the important "conflict" between Wild and the Heartfrees) of the remaining three books.[1] Following Irwin's lead, Dudden views *Wild* as a potentially tidy imitation rogue biography, "an effective anti-Walpole pamphlet," which is unfortunately marred by the more novelistic Heartfree chapters, the satire on the "scandals of fashionable marriages" (in the scenes between Wild and Laetitia), and extraneous "scattered dicta" of political and philosophical interest which "markedly resemble" passages from Fielding's essays in *The Champion*.[2] The comments of Irwin and Dudden, or John Wells's comments about the

disunity caused by Fielding's "insertion" of political commentary into the narrative, have the effect of representing Fielding's satire as a collection of uncongenial bits and pieces lacking thematic unity.

More recently, several critics have attempted to prove a greater consistency of structure. Allan Wendt argues that the introduction of Heartfree does not in fact alter or disrupt the basic structure, but that Heartfree functions consistently as Wild's "foil," just as the narrator promises he will, and thus Wild is a coherent allegory of the conflict between the selfish and the social passions (i.e., greatness vs. goodness).[3] David Evans agrees with Wendt that the superficial structure of the book adheres to this greatness-goodness theme, but he believes that the real satirical purpose or point of the book revolves around the contrast between two other related ideas, "liberty" and "licentiousness." This, he says, is the major theme of Wild, though it is not the explicitly stated one. Evans attempts to demonstrate that this view of the book reveals a much more sophisticated thematic integration of the Wild-Heartfree conflict, the political satire, the social commentary concerning debtors' laws and Newgate prison, and even Mrs. Heartfree's travel adventures.[4] However, although Evans does demonstrate very well that there is a basic moral and political concern about the ambiguous meaning of the

word "liberty" underlying and integrating various sections of the satire, this does not seem adequately to account for Fielding's fundamental theme any better than do those critical studies which have restricted themselves to the strictly moral implications of "greatness" and "goodness."

Other critics have attempted to show that the structure of Wild is a function of the particular types of history and biography which Fielding means to parody.[5] Disagreeing with Irwin's theory about rogue biography, William Farrell finds that the sections dealing with Wild himself more closely resemble the serious biographies of "illustrious" men or even the chapbook romances (like the ones Fielding alludes to in the first chapter of Joseph Andrews: Jack the Giant Killer, Guy of Warwick, and Seven Champions of Christendom), rather than the typical criminal biography.[6] Of all the parallels drawn between Jonathan Wild and various specific biographies, however, the most illuminating is Farrell's comparison of Wild's structure with that of Plutarch's Life of Alexander:

> [Instead of] merely surveying the whole career of his subject, Plutarch singles out certain incidents that illustrate the special merits of his hero, such as temperance, courage, liberality, justice, prudence, magnanimity, and magnificence. The result is a little gallery of pictures, each of which presents Alexander practicing one of the traditional virtues of the great man.

Plutarch's biography maintains a chronological order, but the "greater part of the narrative" is this "series of tableaux."[7]

Although Farrell does not elaborate on this statement, it can easily be demonstrated that Fielding follows this sort of structural pattern in his development of Wild's character, which is the sum of numerous short chapters, each promising at least one completely new and "astonishing Instance of GREATNESS" to add to Wild's previous achievements. It should be noted that the "GREATNESS" which Wild displays in these instances generally takes the form of a verbal triumph. For example, in the first of these "instances of Greatness," Wild manages to talk Bob Bagshot into giving him the greater share of some stolen money and goods. This illustrates Wild's "wonderful knack of discovery and applying to the Passions of Men, . . . to conceive what Arguments would make the quickest Impression" on them (I, 8) (my emphasis). Similarly, he overwhelms Heartfree with a "Torrent of Words" (II, 8), thus carrying GREATNESS to "an immoderate height." Wild maintains this verbal "Greatness" under the worst extremes of "Affliction"; for example, even as he lies condemned to hang, he is enabled by steady drinking "to curse, and swear, and bully, and brave his Fate" (IV, 13).

Apart from this structural device, there is another one which Fielding uses more or less consistently to provide a coherent transition from one section of Wild to another and also to provide an element of suspense. This is the "Journey" motif, which, as Austin Warren puts it, is "one of the oldest and most universal plots" in literature.[8] Despite the triteness of this motif, however, Fielding manages to give it a meaningful and amusing twist. Very early in the book we are entertained with an account of Wild's beginnings as a schoolboy thief:

> . . . once, when he had laid violent Hands on a Book called Gradus ad Parnassum, i.e. A Step towards Parnassus; on which Account his Master, who was a Man of most wonderful Wit and Sagacity, is said to have told him, he wished it might not prove in the Event, Gradus ad Patibulum, i.e. A Step towards the Gallows. (I, 3)

The image of Wild gradually approaching the 'heights' of "Greatness" ("Greatness" meaning fame or notoriety) is kept alive at intervals by references to his progress along the "Road to Greatness" (III, 3), or towards the "Summit of human Glory" (III, 4). Finally, in the penultimate chapter, which describes Wild's execution by hanging, the reader feels a special kind of relief or satisfaction as he recognizes the subtle realization of this journey motif: "A Completion of GREATNESS which is heartily to be wished to every GREAT MAN . . . a noble, public, and exalted End [i.e., an elevation to the scaffold at Tyburn]" (IV, 15) (my

emphasis).

Despite all this evidence of careful design, there are several structural flaws in Wild which cannot easily be excused. For example, the final chapter (IV, 16), particularly the summary of Wild's character, is largely superfluous. The point made here about "the Conformity . . . of his Death to his Life . . . that Jonathan Wild the Great was, what so few GREAT Men are, though all in propriety ought to be--hanged by the Neck till he was dead" (IV, 16) is better expressed in the clever irony of the preceding chapter: "Thus fell Jonathan Wild the GREAT, by a Death as glorious as his Life had been . . ." (IV, 15). Similarly, the literary satire concerning "admirable Conservation of Character" has already been very neatly expressed in Wild's fictitious final action: 'emptying' the Ordinary's pocket of his corkscrew (IV, 15).

The final chapter may be partly intended as a parody of Clarendon's discussion of Charles I in his History of the Rebellion,[9] but it seems to serve less as a support to Fielding's theme than as a vehicle for the exercise of Fielding's wit. For example, one may cite several essentially superfluous (albeit clever) strokes such as the following: "If we consider . . . [the range of Wild's activities] . . . we may challenge not only the Truth of

History, but almost the Latitude of Fiction to equal it" (IV, 16). The final paragraphs of this chapter, which concern the destiny of the Heartfrees and the other characters, might better have been appended to what is presently the next to last chapter, in order to conclude the book more effectively.

Other passages may be pointed to where the structure is hurt by Fielding's artificial inclusion of an irrelevant social issue (Doshy's 'shocking' pregnancy, the result of her liaison with the Count) (III, 13); or by an episode which, though consistent with the thematic flow and poignant in its message, is a bit overworked (the rebellion by Blueskin, which serves to illustrate the constant threats to every Great Man's repose) (III, 14). In general, however, the structure of Wild, given the amazing range of Fielding's personal, political, social, literary, and linguistic targets, is remarkably efficient. The flaws which do exist are generally ones of length or emphasis, rather than irrelevance.

When judging Wild, of course, one should remember that the structure of a satire is, by definition, secondary to the requirements of the satirist's themes. Furthermore, much of the occasional tediousness and digressiveness of Wild is justifiable as part of Fielding's satire on poor writers. Of

this we are reminded by occasional narrative comments: "If we had any Leisure, we would here digress a little on that Ingratitude, which so many Writers have observed in all free Governments towards their GREAT MEN . . ." (IV, 2) (here, despite his mock hesitation, the narrator proceeds to digress).

The thematic consistency which qualifies Wild as an excellent satire is less a function of its structure than of its style, since the style is integral to one of Fielding's major satiric themes--the corruption of language. As most critics believe, Jonathan Wild is truly a satire on "greatness"; but (as was mentioned earlier) Wild is exhibited to us largely through his words, not his deeds,[10] and his "Greatest" moments are primarily verbal.

The narrator's continual use of the words "great," "Great," "GREATNESS," and "GREATNESS" (extra large capital letters in the original text) is a feature which has struck virtually all the critics, though they have generally dismissed it as a simple overdone parody of the panegyric biographer's overuse of superlatives (including words like "wonderful," "remarkable," and "amazing").[11] Alternatively, this feature has been explained according to the general practice of the Opposition writers, who had managed over the years to make "GREATNESS" virtually

synonymous with Walpole.[12] However, there appears to be much more to this device of Fielding's than anyone has realized.

By perusing Wild's table of contents, just as any simple-minded reader would to find an answer to the question: 'What is this book about,' one may gain considerable insight into the meaning of the term "Greatness" and consequently into the larger themes of Jonathan Wild as a whole. With all of the chapter headings thus grouped together, the narrator's overuse of "Great" in all its grammatical and typographical forms is more striking; for example, the absurd intensified superlative of the following chapter heading: "Containing many surprizing Adventures, which our Hero, with GREAT GREATNESS, atchieved" (II, 5). The unusual typeface of GREAT and GREATNESS serves to call attention to the words themselves as words, as symbols quite distinct from the ideas they might represent.

The table of contents also makes it clear that the subject of the book is not really 'the history of Jonathan Wild,' but rather "the History of GREATNESS." This is evident in the headings of two chapters: Bk. I, Ch. 14, which is the return from a digression, "In which the History of GREATNESS is continued"; and Bk. IV, Ch. 13, where, at the end of Mrs. Heartfree's travel account, "The History returns to the Contemplation of GREATNESS." Certainly,

"GREATNESS" here suggests several ideas. There is of course an intentional reflection on Walpole and other contemporary government figures or historical tyrants like Charles XII of Sweden and Alexander the Great, men whose "Greatness" is defined by the narrator explicitly as the talent of "bringing all Manner of Mischief on Mankind" (I, 1). But this is really the definition of "Greatness," not "GREATNESS." If the primary purpose of Jonathan Wild is indeed "the Contemplation of GREATNESS," then the implication is that Fielding is more concerned to draw our attention to the word itself, than to the abstraction it stands for.

The narrator himself seems to use the word "great" (in all its grammatical and typographical forms) quite loosely or freely. He tends to pair it with a small group of superlative adjectives in habitual collocations such as "great and surprizing Events," "great and eminent Men" and "greatest and noblest Endowments" (I, 1). Eventually, "great" becomes loosely synonymous with each of the various adjectives it is coupled with, so that its own particular meaning becomes more diffuse and therefore vague.

In the second chapter (the history of Wild's ancestors), "greatness" appears directly synonymous with "eminence," "gallant Demeanour," "Reputation," and

"illustriousness." The "Great Wolfstan Wild" seems to have earned his title by '*distinguishing* himself eminently' in battle (my emphasis); that is, by making himself *prominent* through his ludicrous mis-interpretation of commands. All of the other ancestors mentioned by the narrator are celebrated for their *notoriety*, rather than for their moral qualities. The first Edward's essential quality is his "gallant Demeanor," which supposedly made him a favorite of Falstaff's. The implication is that Edward managed to give a consistent outward appearance of gallantry, whether he was actually gallant or not. In other words, he was a master of mannerly behavior, like Jonathan himself, with his "steady Countenance" (III, 5) and "assurance." The later ancestors are important largely through their association with more "eminent" persons. One of these is Geoffry Snap, the father-in-law of one of Jonathan Wild's fictitious uncles. Snap, we are told, has acquired "great Reputation," and "a handsome Fortune." Here the word "great" has progressively deteriorated into a mere intensifier, much like "handsome" in the adjacent phrase ("a handsome fortune"). Both "great" and "handsome" here mean little more than "large." Hence, there is no way of knowing for certain what *sort* of man Snap is reputed to be, only that he is "well-known." Of course, the inference that Fielding wants us to make concerning Snap does become quite evident through the final use of "great"

in this passage. We are told that one of Jonathan's aunts, "Honour,"

> . . . died unmarried. She lived many Years in this Town, was a great frequenter of Plays, and used to be remarkable for distributing Oranges to all who would accept of them. (I, 2) (my emphasis)

To use more straightforward language, Honour was an orange-wrench, and therefore probably a prostitute. The careful reader would realize that her being "unmarried" was actually a result of her profession, rather than a result of the sexual "virtue" (i.e., "honour") that her name implies. Of course, like all of the Wilds mentioned in this chapter, Honour too is "great"; i.e., "a great frequenter of Plays." But this last can be translated into the rather absurd equivalent: 'Honour was a frequent frequenter of plays.' By this time, the reader should have been conditioned to notice any form of the word "great," whether capitalized or not. As the narrative of Wild proceeds, each usage of the term tends to contaminate the others. In this early chapter particularly there is a regular, noticeable, significant decline in the precision and dignity of the word "great."

The heavily panegyric tone of the narrator continues through the third chapter, where the birth and education of the "illustrious" (i.e. "Great") Jonathan Wild himself are described. If ones stops to analyse the actual substance of

this panegyric style, he must inevitably isolate the individual terms of praise, or value-laden adjectives, which are applied to Wild and his ancestors. But a list of these adjectives indicates that they are not very different from each other, and that they are all quite empty terms: "great" (in several typefaces), "eminent," "illustrious," "famous," "remarkable," "notable," "considerable," "wonderful," "extraordinary," "preternatural," "marvellous," "lofty and aspiring," "superior." The narrator uses these terms repeatedly, though not quite ad nauseam. A careless reader might assume that these different words imply different qualities; but in fact they all boil down to a vague notion of greater than average size, or else sheer awesomeness due to the possession of some sort of outstanding quality whose exact nature is unknown. Furthermore, all of these adjectives would probably have good connotations for most readers, though in fact they strictly refer to nothing more than an abnormal or excessive sort of reputation or impact. Any connotations of praise which the reader reads into this chapter depend on his own tendency to equate "greatness" (literally largeness or excess of anything) with "goodness" (a value judgment based on something more than the perception of size). But of course the narrator has already warned us that greatness and goodness must not be confused with each other (I, 1). Thus, the superlative adjectives

which dominate the narrator's style seem intended to reinforce the lessons contained in the first chapter.

It has been shown that Jonathan Wild is a history of GREATNESS, and that GREATNESS includes or implies more than the definition of "Greatness" which the narrator provides in the first chapter (". . . Greatness consists in bringing all Manner of Mischief on Mankind . . ."), a definition which is often quoted by those critics who stress the moral or ethical theme of Wild. Though this perpetration of mischief is the true quality or deed which typifies men who are called "great," still the term "Greatness," when defined by its actual usage in the world at large, refers only to a sort of huge stature among men, a large degree of fame or reputation, or an extreme notoriety. Thus, "Greatness" as the narrator actually uses it is primarily a name, not a substance or quality with a reality independent of the word.[13] This may be demonstrated as early as the first chapter heading: "Shewing the wholesome Uses drawn from recording the Atchievements [sic] of those wonderful Productions of Nature called GREAT MEN." If one analyses the meaning of this in order to determine the nature of "Great Men," one is faced with the phrase "wonderful Productions of Nature." There is really nothing distinctive, or specific, about "Productions of Nature," since everything that exists is a "production of Nature." So one is left with the

commonplace, awfully vague adjective "wonderful," which (as was explained above) denotes only overwhelming size or power of some kind. It is significant as well that this chapter heading reads ". . . those wonderful Productions of Nature called GREAT MEN," rather than the quite possible alternative: ". . . those wonderful Productions of Nature, GREAT MEN." The inclusion of the word "called" reminds the reader, in effect, that "Great Men" is simply a title given to some men by other men. The same point is made more directly in Chapter thirteen, to which Fielding calls special attention by its heading, and which may therefore be considered to be (despite the obvious self-irony) a key to the theme of the book as a whole: "A Chapter, of which we are extemely vain and which indeed we look on as our Chef d'Oeuvre. . . ." This chapter contains Wild's famous speech on the nature of Honour:

> . . . In what then doth the Word Honour consist? Why in itself alone. A Man of Honour is he that is called a Man of Honour; and while he is so called, he so remains, and no longer. Think not any Thing a Man commits can forfeit his Honor.[14] (I, 13) (my emphasis)

Throughout Jonathan Wild there is a concern with names as names, with problems of definition, with various levels of language usage, and of course with the connotative values of words which allow for subtle irony. Robert Hopkins, the only critic who has examined the place of language in Wild

as a whole, refers to Fielding's efforts as comic "wordplay,"[15] but this description does not accurately reflect the pervasive quality and serious intent of the satiric vocabulary.

For example, the importance of names as names is stressed in a large number of dialogues between the various characters. In a card game with Wild and several other "Gentlemen," Bagshot discovers that his pocket has been picked by the "grave Gentleman" (actually an ex-infantryman), and promptly leaps up in a fury to announce to the company that a "Pickpocket" is present. The whole company is amazed, not by the fact which is communicated, but by the language which is used: "The scandalous Sound of this Word extremely alarmed the whole Board . . ." (I, 13) (my emphasis). The response of the pickpocket himself is to call Bagshot vulgar names: "D--m your Eyes, you are a Rascal and a Scoundrel'"; rather than to defend himself by discussing the actual charge. Bagshot in turn is ready to fight him over these words, but several of the company interpose. Mr. Snap supports the grave Gentleman's side because "the Affront [being called a pickpocket] was by no Means to be put up by any who bore the Name of a Gentleman" (my emphasis). Finally, Wild responds to Snap's defense of the "Gentleman's" honour with a long-winded speech on the nature of the word "Honour" itself, which he realizes is used very

differently by different people. He concludes from the word's general usage among "good Company" that the word "Honour" consists in itself alone, so that "A Man of Honour is he that is called a Man of Honour. . . ." By this reasoning, Wild manages to turn the blame on Bagshot for his unkind words, and asks him to repair the injury "by directly asserting, that he believes he [the 'grave Gentleman'] is a Man of Honour" (I, 13). The whole contest is thus turned into one of words, rather than facts, despite Bagshot's resistance.

The sort of doublethink which results from this view of honour as a name only is nicely illustrated in the relationship between Wild and Count La Ruse, paricularly by the manner in which their civil conversation belies their knowledge of each other's practices. For example, the following exchange occurs as the Count and Wild are engaged in gambling:

> . . . he asked Mr. Wild if he ever saw so prodigious a Run of Luck (for so he chose to call his Winning, though he knew Wild was well acquainted with his having loaded Dice in his Pocket) the other answered, it was indeed prodigious, and almost sufficient to justify any Person, who did not know him better, in suspecting his fair Play. No Man, I believe, dares call that in Question, replied he. No surely, says Wild, you are well known to be a Man of more Honour. . . . (I, 11)

Here, the Count's adroit response to Wild's insinuation

avoids the act in question by transferring the affront to anyone who would dare to attack the Count in so many words. The Count's reply itself cannot be called false, since there is no one else who would so bluntly accuse him. And Wild's rather sly response to this is also true, since the Count does have a reputation of honour. However, Wild's response is at the same time untrue, since it does not actually express his own opinion.

One may compare this dialogue between Wild and the Count, as well as the "grave Gentleman's" response to Bagshot's calling him a "Pickpocket," to Laetitia's response when Wild calls her a "Bitch" in the amusing "Dialogue matrimonial" following their marriage. In this dialogue Wild and Laetitia inform each other that their union has been a purely utilitarian, sexual one, that this attraction is now ended, and that they will henceforth agree to despise each other, though in a very civil manner. Laetitia's anger is not really aroused until Wild uses a most impolite word to indicate clearly what he has only been insinuating all along: "--But Pray, Mr. Wild, why B--ch? Why did you suffer such a Word to escape you?" (III, 8). She becomes obsessed with this word, which in her mind represents a greater crime than any action Wild has done or might have done to her. She is also highly offended by Wild's habit of swearing, just as he is offended when she descends to calling him a "Wretch":

Jonathan.

D--N you, Madam, have not I more Reason to complain, when you tell me you married me for your Convenience only?

Laetitia.

VERY fine, truly. Is it Behaviour worthy a man to swear at a Woman? Yet why should I mention what comes from a Wretch whom I despise?

Jonathan.

DON'T repeat that Word so often. . . . (III, 8)

Laetitia views language as a function of "manners," such that bluntness or honesty are great crimes. In her statement of regret for having married Wild, this notion of "manners" is summarized with a nice bit of unconscious irony: "I flattered myself that I should at least have been used with good Manners" (III, 8). Out of context Laetitia's phrase ("used with good Manners") seems a mere cliché; however, the word "used" has a larger significance within the dialogue and within Wild as a whole. Wild and Laetitia have indeed used each other, have taken advantage of each other; although both are willing to accept such use (or abuse) as long as it is polite. Therefore Wild's reference to Laetitia's having made her "Convenience" out of him is also ironic, since "Convenience" was an eighteenth-century euphemism for "female utensil" (i.e., dildo).[16]

This notion of people making mechanical use of each other has reference also to Wild's monologue concerning the use of "Hands" by Great Men, and Wild's view of his gang members as so many "Instruments" or "Tools" (I, 1; etc.). To Wild words are also tools, as we see in his discourse on "Honour" (I, 13) (see above). He prizes the word "Honour" for its unique "Use and Virtue," for its "inestimable Value" (I, 13). Again the word "Use" carries significant utilitarian connotations, as does "Virtue" (in the sense of 'power' or 'efficacy'). And Wild's appreciation of the "Value" of "Honour" is related to his mercantile value system, which is a minor theme throughout the book. The earliest evidence of this mercantile side of Wild is contained in the narrator's comment that Wild disliked "School-Learning" because the "Sciences . . . are generally acknowledged to be a very unprofitable Study" (I, 3) (my emphasis).

The accent on names, titles, and name-calling, together with the Great Man's use of words as "tools," is also directly related to the theme of fame or reputation, which is a very important one in Jonathan Wild. For example, as was noted earlier, Wild's ancestors are celebrated for their "fame" rather than for their deeds (I, 2). In the same way, Count La Ruse is remarkable for being "a Man of considerable Figure" (I, 4), and Wild's ambition is to "make a great

Figure" in life (I, 5). Reputation is demonstrated to be a major incentive for all ranks of life. The maid at Snap's house is finally persuaded to help the Count escape after Wild assures her that she may accept his bribe and still keep her "Honesty" (that is, her reputation for honesty) intact (I, 6). Similarly, the Count notes that the only difference between a Statesman and a Highwayman is that the first way of making one's fortune is "more reputable" than the other (I, 5).

The fault of reputations is that they are too often built on words, rather than actions. As Hatfield observes, this is a favorite issue with Fielding:

> One of Fielding's objections to Pamela is that the vaunted 'virtue' of the heroine rests largely on her own professions . . . . . and Fielding's good characters, it will be observed, are not much more trustworthy as witnesses to their own merits and motives than are his villains.[17]

Words are more susceptible to ambiguity than actions, yet men are only too inclined to trust the words of others rather than trusting their own observations or judgment. Wild as a Great Man is shrewd enough to take advantage of this tendency:

> . . . he himself was always very liberal of honest Professions . . . never in the least scrupling to swear by his Honour, even to those who knew him the best. . . . (IV, 16).

Even the Count, who is quite clever in his own way, is subject to Wild's skill at verbal persuasion, as he indicates to Wild after their debate on the relative merits of high and low "greatness" that, "though he did not agree with the whole of his Friend's Doctrine, [he] was, however, highly pleased with his Argument . . ." (I, 6). One senses here that "Argument" refers to Wild's rhetoric as much as his logic. The narrator himself is subject to a tendency to enshrine the sounding rhetoric of famous men; for example, in his inane digression on proverbs (II, 12; omitted in the 1754 edition) and his assemblage of Wild's "Maxims" (IV, 16). The narrator also likes to embellish his own commentary with supposedly learned 'sayings,' even on the most trivial occasions: "And as it is a wise and philosophical Observation, that one Misfortune never comes alone, the Count had hardly passed the Examination of Mr. Bagshot, when he fell into the Hands of Mr. Snap . . ." (I, 8).

The way in which Wild manipulates words as tools, redefining them to suit his immediate purpose, may be illustrated by his extortion of three-fourths of Bagshot's share of loot from his robbery of the Count: ". . . [Wild] often declared that he looked upon borrowing to be as good a Way of taking as any, and, as he called it, the genteelest Kind of Sneaking-Budge [a cant term for "Sneak-

thievery"[18] . . ." (I, 8). Wild's equation of "borrowing," "taking," and the "Sneaking-Budge" is typical of Fielding's mixture of genteel, vulgar, and cant vocabulary in Wild. Wild in this instance is more aware than the narrator is of the essential similarity of the acts signified, despite the different terms which are employed.[19] Unlike Wild, the narrator seems to believe that the magic which surrounds polite terms has a real basis.

The narrator's taste for attractive or polite language leads him to "embellish" Wild's speeches and to describe the actions of Wild and his ancestors and gang in romantic or unusually formal terms. An instance of the subtle connotative effects which result from the narrator's genteel diction is the characterization of Wild Langfanger (or Longfinger), an ancestor who could,

> without the Knowledge of the Proprietor, with great Ease and Dexterity draw forth a Man's Purse from any Part of his Garment where it was deposited . . . (I, 2).

The words "Proprietor" and "deposited" are consistent with the image of Wild as a businessman who simply engages in financial transactions with his gang and the public; an image which is first formed in the narrator's discussion of Wild's management of his schoolmates' petty robberies--where Wild was always "Concerter" of the "Design" and "Treasurer of the Booty" (I, 3). The word "Proprietor" seems to suggest

less of a right to security of property than the word "Owner" would if it were applied to the man whose purse is stolen. Similarly, the purse is only "deposited" in the man's pocket, which gives the impression that it is simply meant to rest there temporarily in any case--so that Wild's removal of it seems only to advance the inevitable. Besides this, the Langfanger passage has the curious effect of depersonalizing or de-emphasizing the man whose purse is stolen. This effect is partly due to the subordination of the man grammatically within the sentence: the emphasis is placed on his "Knowledge" and his "Purse," while the man is relegated to a modifying prepositional phrase ("of the Proprietor") or possessive adjective ("Man's"). The effect is reinforced by the passive verb phrase used to describe how the purse came to its original resting place (". . . any Part of his Garment where it was deposited . . ."), which leaves the grammatical agent (i.e., the man himself) undefined.

The connotative significance of individual key words is sometimes more obviously signalled by the narrator's careful qualification; for example, his references to Laetitia's "nice Chastity" and "strict Virtue": ". . . had [Wild] not with many Oaths promised her Marriage, we could scarcely have been strictly justified in calling his Passion strictly honourable . . ." (I, 9). The narrator's claims to honesty

thus rest on his adherence to the "strict" senses of words, much as does Wild's in his use of "Honour." In fact, the meaning of "Honour" as Wild defines it (I, 13) (see above, p. 70) is "strictly" correct in terms of the word's original meaning of "good name" or "reputation." An instance of the narrator's persistent use of terms which are only "strictly" correct in his mention of the "strict Friendship" between Wild's uncle Edward and a clergyman associated with Newgate (I, 2). The implication is that their relationship is more passionate than simple friendship, especially as we are told that Edward, though he married a daughter of Geoffrey Snap, had "no Issue" by her. The innuendo of homosexuality and impotence with women is also present in passages dealing with Count La Ruse, who very early conceives "an Inclination to an Intimacy" with the youthful Wild, whose "vast Abilities" (not just as a pickpocket, one assumes) cannot be concealed from one of his discernment (I, 4). There is an indication that the Count is more successful at playing cards than he is at playing other games with Snap's daughters (I, 4); also, in the "Dialogue matrimonial" between Wild and Laetitia, Laetitia insinuates that Wild has difficulty satisfying her (III, 8). The purpose of the sexual innuendo, it would seem, is to reinforce Fielding's view that the Great are always defeated by their insatiability, or licentiousness. The Count, because of his

fondness for Wild, allows himself to be robbed and betrayed by him, and Wild's defeat by various women fulfills the vision, supposedly experienced during pregnancy by his mother, wherein Wild is begotten by two contradictory deities: Mercury [the god of eloquence, skill, and thieving] and Priapus [the god of procreation or licentiousness] (I, 3).

The reader is encouraged to 'embellish' in his own mind these terms which the narrator employs in a strict manner. For example, Fielding alerts us with full capitals to the larger meaning of an otherwise innocuous word in the narrator's comment about the habits of Wild's father: "The old Gentleman, it seems, was a FOLLOWER of the Fortunes of Mr. Snap . . ." (I, 4). Thus Wild senior is identified with political toadies of all kinds. In general, however, the connotative implications of the narrator's language are more subtle. Once the reader is aware of the semantics of "Greatness," he may become more sensitive to the pervasiveness of "greatness" in its uncapitalized form. For there certainly seems to be an ironic purpose behind the narrator's frequent use of "great" or "greatly" as apparently simple intensifiers; for example, when he explains that the Count is "greatly skilful" at cards, or refers to the Count and Wild as "Men of great Genius" (I, 4). Are their skills really "great," or are they rather of

the devious kind appropriate to Great Men? We are told somewhat later that Wild "entertained a great Opinion" of Bagshot, though this comment is immediately followed by an account of Wild's extorting most of the loot gained through Bagshot's labours (I, 8). The interesting point here is that the narrator's comment is not untrue, providing one is aware of the possible meaning of "a great Opinion" as that sort of appreciation which we should expect a Great Man to have for a useful "tool."

This interpretation of strict meanings and latent connotations can work both ways. The reader may read criticism where the narrator seems to praise or impartially relate his subjects' actions or speeches, but the reader may also look for the more praiseworthy 'strict' meaning which is obscured by the unfavorable connotations of words which the narrator uses in an apparently derogatory sense. For example, when the narrator criticizes writers who are afraid to attack or contradict "the obsolete Doctrines of a Set of simple Fellows called, in Derision, Sages or Philosophers . . ." (I, 1), the irony involved in the adjectives "obsolete" and "simple" is rather complicated. This is not a case of simple 'praise by blame' rhetoric requiring only a mental substitution of each term's antonym, since it appears from the narrator's arguments that both adjectives are correct, although not in the sense that the narrator would

intend. "Obsolete," as defined strictly, means simply "out of use." The narrator's usage implies that these doctrines are out of use because they are wrong; however, the fault for their disuse may as easily rest with those who have cast them aside. Similarly, the word "simple" ("simple Fellows called . . . Philosophers") originally meant only "honest" or "artless"; although through time it has come to mean "foolish." A series of similar adjectives which the narrator applies with apparent contempt to Heartfree and his family or friends can be strictly interpreted in this same way to yield a favorable image instead; for example, "silly" (which originally meant "innocent, simple, helpless"), "pitiful" (meaning "compassionate" rather than "contemptible"), and so on. The quiet but very suggestive irony of these terms is not something concocted by Fielding, but is inherent in the words as they are commonly used, because the corruption of language eloquently reflects the corruption of values. Hence the irony is not that philosophers are called "simple" when they are not "simple," but rather that simplicity itself has become a ridiculed quality.

In addition to maintaining a relatively consistent structural design in Wild, Fielding, through his usage of various words and concepts related to "Greatness," adheres to the more important satirical ideal of thematic unity. What most critics have concluded, that Jonathan Wild is an

exposure of greatness and a defense of goodness, is still true, but in a more complicated sense than has been recognized. As Wendt has shown, Heartfree is not a perfect model of good nature, but is himself satirized for his lack of prudence or self-interest or judgment. Yet good nature is the virtue that Fielding means "chiefly to inculcate" in his satire, as Dryden would put it, and "Greatness" (the abused word itself as well as the actual qualities that so-called "great men" possess) is the vice he wishes to expose. Prudence (essentially good judgment or careful discrimination) is of course a favourite theme with Fielding, as has been demonstrated especially for Tom Jones.[20] And discriminating judgment is an indispensable part of Fielding's conception of good nature, the chief virtue which men should cultivate.[21] Fielding would probably agree with Dryden that the main use of satire is Horatian, to correct the follies of mankind by educating their understanding. According to this view, most men are not wicked, but deluded or undiscriminating. In other words, most men lack, not benevolence, but good judgment. Therefore, by conditioning his readers to the need for careful discrimination in their reaction to and use of language, and by emphasizing the need for definition, Fielding may perhaps teach them the very part of virtue which they lack, the habit of prudence or careful judgment. Thus the "wordplay" in Wild is really a

serious, integral element of Fielding's thematic and artistic purpose.

Chapter Four: Ironic Tone: The Role of Syntax and Other Semantic Devices

One could continue indefinitely to analyse the ironic effects of individual words in Jonathan Wild, but an appreciation of the general quality of the book's ironic style would be incomplete if confined to these patterns of connotation. The effect of Fielding's irony on the reader often depends on longer, sustained passages whose logical or rhetorical techniques deserve more attention than they have received.[1] As irony is the outstanding artistic feature of Wild,[2] so each critic's evaluation of Wild depends largely on his assessment of the book's ironic tone and ironic consistency.

It has been argued above that Dudden and Wright are incorrect in calling the tone of Fielding's irony in this work "acrid, incisive, mordant, implacably severe," or "angry" (see above, pp. 2-3). Yet one finds remarkably similar assessments among a number of critics; for example, the following comparable statements:

> The subject is utterly vile, and the irony is correspondingly grim and merciless.[3]
>
> . . . [in Jonathan Wild] a savage irony plays around vice of the vilest kind.[4]

Neither critic explains what he means by "grim" or "savage" irony; nor, for that matter, by "vile" subject matter. One wonders whether Wright, Dudden, and Dyson have read Wild very closely, or whether their rather cursory evaluations may be derivative from the earlier study of Wild by Aurelien Digeon. Digeon also characterizes the irony of this work as "savage,"[5] especially in those scenes dealing directly with Wild: "The figure of Wild is harshly drawn, with a cruel and naked irony; the execution is that of an engraver rather than a painter." Digeon also refers to the irony as "cynical and implacable,"[6] but this image of 'cruel, naked, cynical, implacable' irony seems to be modified by his later statement:

> The tone is seldom raised as high as indignation; the irony remains cold and incisive, applied to a subject firmly detested but treated artistically. . . .[7]

Even allowing for an obscurity or ambiguity of terms which might arise from the fact that Digeon's book has been translated into English from French, there still seems to be some confusion here as to whether the tone of Fielding's irony is angry or restrained.

Digeon illustrates the 'harshness' of Fielding's irony by several examples of a technique which he compares with a habit of Voltaire's; that is, achieving mockery "by the impact of short sentences."[8] Digeon attributes this ironic

effect to Fielding's "parody of the severely impassive style of the historian," and one of the passages he cites is the notable description of the fate of Thomas Fierce when Wild sees fit to dispose of him:

> His only Hopes were now in the Assistance which our Hero had promised him. These unhappily failed him: So that the Evidence being plain against him, and he making no Defence, the Jury convicted him, the Court condemned him, and Mr. Ketch executed him. (II,5)

Digeon's account of this striking passage implies that Fielding is mocking Fierce; however, the effect is rather to arouse our sympathy for Fierce in reaction to the callous brevity of the narrator's treatment. A similar effect is created by many of the brief, matter-of-fact passages relating the more emotional events in the Heartfrees' lives.[9]

The final two chapters of the book, dealing with the execution of Wild and the fate of his cohorts and victims, are generally related in the terse style noted by Digeon. However, the intentions behind this style do not seem as simple as Digeon concludes they are. The penultimate paragraph is particularly noteworthy:

> As to all the other persons Mentioned in this History, in the Light of GREATNESS, they had all the Fate adapted to it, being every one hanged by the Neck, save two, viz. Miss Theodosia Snap, who was transported to America, where she was pretty well married, reformed, and made a

> good Wife; and the Count, who recovered of the Wound he had received from the Hermit, and made his Escape into France, where he committed a Robbery, was taken, and broke on the Wheel. (IV, 16)

The beginning of this sentence-paragraph ("As to all . . . hanged by the Neck . . .") does not have the strong effect of mockery which it might appear to have out of context, for the point it makes has been laboured throughout the book. There is, to some extent, the effect of a neat dismissal of those who are hardly worth our attention, especially the Count, whose excruciating punishment is passed off as a matter of course. Still, this final note about the Count seems much less a mockery of him than a satiric reflection of the narrator's own insensibility to the suffering of any but his Great Man, Wild.

Another point which must be made about terse passages of this kind is that they are most common in the narrative portions of the book. The comment about the Count's capture and torturous execution may simply be meant to reflect the speed with which the narrated events occurred (for elsewhere the narrator enforces brevity on himself in order to imitate the action described "with the Rapidity of our Narration") (III,7).[10] Therefore, ridicule--whether of the characters or of the narrator--is not necessarily the major intention behind Fielding's use of this style.

Digeon implies that the Voltaire-like terse statement is typical of Wild as a whole, but this is not accurate. More typical is the narrator's continuously inflated commentary, which is expressed in fairly long, balanced, periodic sentences whose periodicity is reinforced by the intrusion of numerous parenthetical or qualifying clauses.[11] An example may be drawn from the final chapter, where Fielding makes his last satiric thrust at Alexander the Great and Caesar (or rather at the historians who have dwelt on their "goodness"):

> What had the Destroyers of Mankind, that glorious Pair, one of which came into the World to usurp the Dominion, and abolish the Constitution of his own Country; the other to conquer, enslave, and rule over the whole World, at least as much as was well known to him, and the Shortness of his Life would give him Leave to visit; what had, I say, such as these to do with Clemency? (IV, 16)

The irony of the final chapters is as "harsh" [i.e., strongly stated (as Digeon uses this term)] as anywhere in Wild. Yet in this relatively heavy ironic denunciation of two notorious tyrants, the tone is definitely not 'cynical,' or 'acrid,' or bitter. The comic touch of the parenthetical clauses which deflate Alexander's achievement (". . . at least as much as was well known to him . . . Leave to visit . . .") is the most impressive part of the sentence, though the least important part grammatically. The irony is unconscious on the narrator's part; he seems to record the

details which constitute these deflating clauses out of a simple historical concern for facts, even seemingly impertinent ones.

The same incongruous attention to minor details renders comic what would otherwise be an unpleasantly violent final scene between Wild and Laetitia:

> She then proceeded to a Recapitulation of his Faults in an exacter Order and with more perfect Memory than one would have imagined her capable of; and, it is probable, would have rehearsed a complete Catalogue, had not our Hero's Patience failed him, so that with the utmost Fury and Violence, he caught her by the Hair and kicked her, as heartily as his Chains would suffer him, out of the Room. (IV, 15)

Because of its syntax, this sentence tends to dull the violence it describes. Laetitia's presumably sharp rebukes are verbosely summarized; one notices first the cumbersome verb phrase (i.e., "proceeded to a Recapitulation" rather than "recapitulated"). Then there is a plodding accretion of prepositional phrases ("to a Recapitulation," "of his Faults," "in an exacter Order," "with more perfect Memory"), and a general redundancy (for instance, what is the distinction between an 'exact Order' and a 'perfect Memory'; and is not her 'rehearsal of a complete Catalogue' synonymous with these preceding adverbial phrases?). One may argue that this grammatical structure serves to convey the monotony of Laetitia's "Catalogue" of insults, but the

sentence also effectively dissipates the violence of her abuse.

The second half of the narrator's statement threatens to imitate Wild's brutal actions: ". . . our Hero's patience failed him . . . he caught her by the Hair and kicked her . . . out of the Room"; but this structure is likewise diluted by superfluous adverbial phrases (". . . with the utmost Fury and Violence . . . as heartily as his Chains would suffer him . . ."). The first phrase includes a balanced pair of substantives ("Fury and Violence") typical of the narrator's stately prose, both from a rhythmic and from a logical (because they are mutually redundant) point of view. The latter adverbial phrase ("as heartily as his Chains would suffer him") is chiefly responsible for the comedy of the passage, partly because it interrupts the violent speed of the description. It also mitigates the painful impression of the blunt blows which are described by distracting our attention to the small detail of Wild's chains. Perhaps one purpose of this softening effect is to engage our sympathy for Wild, who acts here primarily as a foil for Laetitia's bitchiness.

The amusing effects of the narrator's incongruous parentheses or empty verbosity operate throughout the entire text of Jonathan Wild. The 'vileness' satirized, whether the

vices are Wild's or anyone else's, is truly ridiculed rather than castigated. The humour of Wild does not occur only in the obviously farcical mock-epic battle scenes (as Digeon argues), but is inseparable from the general image which Fielding paints of Wild's blustering incompetence.[12] Even when Wild commits his most desperate action, deciding to ignore his conscience and let Heartfree be executed, the ironic tone is unmistakably comic, albeit grotesque: " 'Shall I, to redeem the worthless Life of this silly Fellow, suffer my Reputation to contract a Stain, which the Blood of Millions cannot wipe away!' " (IV, 4). The comic effect of this non sequitur is heightened by its echo of an earlier passage, where the narrator's exaggerated horror at Tishy's illegitimate pregnancy is meant to mock the polite world's concern for the external proprieties:

> It is indeed a Calamity highly to be lamented, when it stains untainted Blood, and happens to an honourable House. An Injury never to be repaired. A Blot never to be wiped out. A Sore never to be healed. (III, 13)

Fielding's comic deflation of Wild, as well as other Great Men like Caesar and Alexander, is consistent with Fielding's belief in universal human fallibility, despite the attempts of historians to present perfectly consistent heroes: ". . . in Vindication of our Hero, we must beg Leave to observe, that Nature is seldom so kind as those Writers

who draw Characters absolutely perfect" (IV, 4). Fielding's acceptance of human imperfection accounts for his affection for the Heartfrees, despite their occasional pomposity or other faults, but it is more remarkable how this notion of imperfection affects his view of what others would call 'evil.' One of the neatest ironies presented in Wild is the notion that evil or "Daemonism" is itself a "Perfection" which no mere human can attain (I, 1). The reader may derive a very curious sort of reassurance from this notion that the same fallibility which keeps men from angelic goodness also exempts them from angelic (i.e., Satanic) evil.

Although the comic tone of the irony directed at Wild and other Great Men is fairly easy to demonstrate, the tone of some ironic passages concerning the Heartfrees is less certain. From the consistently ironic chapter which introduces the Heartfree, it is evident that their major weaknesses are not criminal ones--simply a lack of prudence on Heartfree's part (who in this resembles Parson Adams of Joseph Andrews) and a 'typical' female vanity on Mrs. Heartfree's part (II, 1). Mrs. Heartfree's vanity becomes especially apparent in the history of her travels, where she dwells on the compliments which were made to her by all of her companions, despite a gentle hint from the listening magistrate that she should press on with the more relevant facts (IV, 12). Incidentally, an important function of Mrs.

Heartfree's digression is to present a more complete, more attractive picture of the Heartfrees without departing from the narrator's stated aims and bias. For example, we gain insight into the Heartfrees' close and happy relationship through a very subtle but effective narrative device, when Mrs. Heartfree's story is twice interrupted by a significant smile or glance from Heartfree (IV, 7). The narrator notes these interruptions parenthetically, in a very brief and factual manner, but their introduction at all is brilliant on Fielding's part, as an economical way of enhancing the reader's feeling for the realism and good humour of the situation.

Consistent with this view of the Heartfrees, the irony present in Mrs. Heartfree's travel account is generally of a mild, amusing kind; but there are important exceptions. The callous tone of Mrs. Heartfree's comments concerning the wounded Count "weltering in his Blood" (IV, 10) has been discussed above (see pp. 29-30).[13] In addition, one of the most puzzling passages refers to Heartfree's reaction when Friendly informs him that his wife has abruptly left the city with Wild. The narrator prefaces his comment, as usual, with a choice bit of wisdom:

> It is the Observation of many wise Men, who have studied the Anatomy of the human Soul with more Attention than our young Physicians generally bestow on that of the Body; that great and violent Surprize hath

> a different Effect from that which is wrought in a good Housewife by perceiving any Disorders in her Kitchen. . . . (III, 1)

The irony of the term "wise Men" is evident; as is the simultaneous ironic reflection on the narrator's intelligence. But from here the satire branches wildly in several directions, attacking careless physicians, then peevish housewives (by a queer mental leap), then jumping on to contrast to this the historical reaction of Croesus when his family was taken from him. Finally, at the end of two long, periodically structured sentences, we arrive at the point of the whole discussion--Heartfree's own reaction to Friendly's shocking news:

> . . . Croesus . . . when he saw his Wife and Children in that condition, stood stupid and motionless; so stood poor Heartfree on this Relation of his Apprentice, nothing moving but his Colour, which entirely forsook his Countenance. (III, 1)

On one level, the empty suspense created between the beginning and end of the paragraph is purely comic, even though there is some satiric sense in the narrator's unaccountable reasoning. The real difficulty of the passage lies in the final comment about Heartfree, which is also comic because of the silly pun involved (". . . nothing moving but his Colour, which entirely forsook his Countenance"). While this is amusing by itself, the passage seems quite out of keeping with the apparent seriousness of

the rest of the chapter, which emphasizes Heartfree's despair and Friendly's concern. The final comment may be intended to ridicule the narrator's stylistic pretensions, but it also has the effect of ridiculing Heartfree.

In addition to these uncertainties of tone, one finds occasional inconsistencies or lapses in the ironic attitudes of the narrator. For example, when Friendly is called "the good Apprentice" without the usual qualification of the word "good" (III, 1); or when the narrator includes a lengthy emotional scene between Heartfree and Friendly without apologizing (IV, 1); or when Wild is credited with "good-humour" (regarding Doshy's pregnancy; III, 13) or "modesty" (in his suicide attempt; IV, 15) as if these were admirable qualities, although the narrator has painstakingly (and repeatedly) proven the contrary. Such lapses, however, are not very numerous or obvious, and it should be stressed that the irony in Jonathan Wild is remarkably consistent both in its comic tone and in its adherence to the narrator's inverted ethics (regarding "greatness" and "goodness") as set out in the very first chapter. In this sense one must agree with Saintsbury's commendation of Wild's "almost pure irony."[14]

If Wild is uneven or imperfect, this is due, not to lapses in ironic tone, but rather to variations in the

subtlety or sophistication of the irony--for there is a wide range of ironic devices employed, as well as a wide range in the delicacy of application of each device or technique. This range of subtlety and effect has already been illustrated somewhat in the discussion of Fielding's exploitation of the connotations of individual words. Nevertheless, the irony of Wild is in general much more sophisticated than most critics (including George Levine) have concluded:

> . . . aside from his only occasional use of connotative irony, Fielding relies most heavily in Jonathan Wild on the most transparent of verbal devices to achieve his ironic effects.[15]

It is true that frequently Fielding's irony is "transparent." This applies especially to two devices--his explicit translations from the genteel idiom or underworld cant to the "vulgar" idiom, and his use of bathos. An example of the first device occurs at the end of the second book, where Wild returns to London after he escapes drowning at sea. The paragraph concerned is marred by the explicitness of the translation provided:

> . . . [Wild] made so handsome a Booty by way of Borrowing, a Method of taking which we have before mentioned, to have his Approbation, that he was enabled to provide himself with a Place in the Stagecoach. . . . (II, 14) (my emphasis)

The phrase specified is faulty for two related reasons.

First, it insults the reader's memory, since Wild's notion of "Borrowing" has already been very carefully stressed. Second, even had the narrator never defined "Borrowing" as "taking," the special sense of "Borrowing" would be unmistakable here from the context, due to the key word "Booty." Much more effective is the amusing passage which describes the Count's own skill at "borrowing," where the "conveying"--"taking" translation is only implied: ". . . in Reality, that Gentleman . . . had since his Arrival at Mr. Snap's, conveyed a Piece of Plate to pawn, by which Means he had furnished himself with ten Guineas" (I, 12). The device of contrasting vulgar language with cant or genteel language is to some extent used for simple, unimaginative ironic inversion; for example, when the Debtors in Newgate are described: "The greatest Character among them was that of a Pickpocket, or in truer Language, a File . . ." (IV, 13) (obviously the vulgar "Pickpocket" is 'truer' than the cant word "File"). In other instances this contrastive device serves as a satiric comment on the corruption of language through the middle-class abuse of supposedly "genteel" terms.[16] Despite the occasional success of this device, Fielding seems to overdo it.

The other fairly obvious device, bathos, is sometimes used very effectively by Fielding; for example, in the list of the "Qualifications necessary to form a true Gallant,"

which qualifications together constitute all there is to Bagshot:

> He was then six Feet high, had large Calves, broad Shoulders, a ruddy Complexion, with brown curled Hair, a modest Assurance, and clean Linen. (I, 12)

Unfortunately, the neat stroke achieved with the phrase "clean Linen" is followed by a rather clumsy statement of the "small Deficiencies" which offset Bagshot's noble qualities. In a manner directly contrary to his definition of "Greatness," the narrator criticizes Bagshot for his illiteracy and his lack of "Honesty" and "Good-nature" (I, 12). Bathos itself is most successful when it occurs at the end of a long pretentious passage, as is the case with "clean Linen." When 'low' terms are injected into the middle of an otherwise well-sustained passage of 'fine writing,' that portion of writing which <u>follows</u> the sudden bathetic drop may be ruined because the reader is unable to recover quickly enough to the mood of the high style. An otherwise excellent ironic passage which is spoiled by this sort of placement of a 'vulgar' phrase is the description of Wild's dalliance with Molly Straddle while he is <u>en route</u> to a visit with Laetitia:

> . . . Miss <u>Molly</u> seeing Mr. <u>Wild</u>, stopp'd him, and with a Familiarity peculiar to a genteel Town Education, tapp'd <u>or rather slapp'd</u> him on the Back, and asked him to treat her with a Pint of Wine, at a neighbouring Tavern. . . . (II, 3) (my emphasis)

The line between overdone irony and effective sarcasm is a very fine one, as the following comment about Wild as a boy illustrates:

> Nor must we omit the early Indications which he gave of the Sweetness of his Temper; for tho' he was by no Means to be terrified into Compliance, yet might he by a Sugar-Plumb be brought to your Purpose: Indeed, to say the Truth, he was to be bribed to any thing, which made many say, he was certainly born to be a Great Man. (I, 3)

The last sentence, despite its giveaway, still agrees well with the tone of the passage as a whole, due to its general rhythm and periodic structure. Another key to the success of the final sentence is its position at the end of the paragraph, where the fall to the relatively blunt word "bribed" is quite acceptable.

Direct censure is rare in Wild, and of only limited or mixed success where it does occur. An example is the summary of a dinner at Mr. Snap's house. Unfortunately, the style of the paragraph involved is not sufficiently integrated with the style of the chapter as a whole, although by itself the paragraph is quite effective:

> Nothing very remarkable passed at Dinner. The Conversation (as is usual in polite Company) rolled chiefly on what they were then eating, and what they had lately eaten. In which the military Gentleman, who had served in Ireland, gave them a very particular Account of a new manner of roasting Potatoes, and others

> gave an Account of other Dishes. In short, an indifferent By-stander would have concluded from their Discourse, that they had all come into this World for no other purpose, than to fill their Bellies; and indeed if this was not the chief, it is probable it was the most innocent Design Nature had in their Formation. (I, 12)

Particularly successful here is the monotonous repetition of clause structure, to imitate the monotony satirized (". . . what they were then eating, and what they had lately eaten. . . . [the Gentlemen] gave them a very particular Acccount of a new manner of roasting Potatoes, and others gave an Account of other Dishes"). The bathos involving the term "Bellies" is perhaps excessive, as Fielding has made the same point as clearly and more deftly earlier, in Wild's speech to Bagshot on the fruits of labour:

> . . . the low, mean, <u>useful</u> Part of Mankind, are born Slaves to the Wills, and for the Use of their Superiors, as well as the Cattle. It is well said of us, the higher Order of Mortals, that we are born only to devour the Fruits of the Earth . . . . (I, 8) (my emphasis)

Another flaw in the paragraph about the dinner at Snap's is the rather careless use of an ironic device which Fielding generally uses more skillfully; that is, the casual employment of third parties as mouthpieces for his own opinion. The "indifferent By-stander" is rather obviously contrived here; elsewhere Fielding manages to utilize characters already present in a scene. The conclusion to the

1743 edition of Wild is an example of the mouthpiece device well exploited, within the context of the narrator's lament that Great Men are not sufficiently rewarded for their achievements:

> . . . while Courts and Cities resound the Praises of the said GREAT MEN, there are still some in Cells and Cottages, who view thier GREATNESS with a malignant Eye; and dare affirm, that these GREAT MEN . . . are generally the most wretched and truly contemptible of all the Works of the Creation. (IV, 16)

While it is true that a number of flaws in Wild can be traced to Fielding's more "transparent" ironic devices, there are countless subtler touches which more fairly represent the general texture of the work. For example, a delayed but very provocative effect is created through the interaction of a family of clichés of the kind "well-drest" and "well-edified." As an illustration of Wild's "Love" for Mrs. Heartfree, the narrator recalls the passion which,

> . . . after the Exercise of the Dominical Day is over, a lusty Divine is apt to conceive for the well-drest Sirloin, or handsome Buttock, which the well-edified 'Squire, in Gratitude, sets before him, and which, so violent is his Love, he is desirous to devour. (II, 8)

The metaphor of this passage, which expands on Fielding's satirical references elsewhere to the appetites of Great Men and the upper classes, is extended to include Wild's plan to take Mrs. Heartfree to "one of those Eating-Houses in

Covent-Garden, where female Flesh is deliciously drest and served up to the greedy Appetites of young Gentleman . . ." (II, 9). The contemporary allusion here, marvellous for its satiric obliqueness, is to the very popular performance of the 'posture-woman' on a large platter at the Rose Tavern.[17] The grotesque interaction of these images of the Sunday sirloin and the literal female "dish" has not only a local effect on Wild's image of Mrs. Heartfree, but must also be intended to recur in the reader's mind shortly after, when Mrs. Heartfree's real agony is cleverly compared with its counterpart in the polite world:

> We must now return to Mrs. Heartfree, who past a sleepless Night in as great Agonies and Horrour for the Absence of her Husband, as a fine well-bred Woman would feel at the Return of her's from a long Voyage or Journey. (II, 9)

The inherent irony of this statement is greatly enhanced by the reverberations which arise out of the simple epithet "well-bred." Because words made up of similar morphemes tend to be associated in one's memory,[18] the "well-bred" woman recalls the image of the "well-drest" sirloin and the "well-edified" squire of the preceding chapter, as well as an earlier passage describing Wild's angry search for the Count, who has vanished with Heartfree's jewels:

> Not the highest-fed Footman of the highest-bred Woman of Quality knocks with

> more Impetuosity, than Wild did at the Count's Door, which was immediately opened by a well-drest Livery Man, who answered, his Master was not at Home. (II, 4)

The additional strong association of "highest-bred," "highest-fed," and "well-bred" because of their rhyme enhances the reader's sensitivity to this family of epithets as abused words per se, beyond the primary satirical point which Fielding makes with his appetite metaphor.

The reverberation of these ironic clichés is especially impressive as an indication of the consistency with which Fielding represents the narrator's point of view, while exploiting every opportunity to relate the narrator's casual comments to his own larger themes. For example, the fabric of Wild is largely sustained by scattered strokes of ambiguity which are more remarkable for their collective effect, than for their individual brilliance. Of this kind are the numerous comparisons of Wild with heroic models; as in the following chapter heading: "Containing as great and as noble Instances of human greatness as are to be met with in ancient or modern History" (I, 11). Also included in this group are numerous comments evaluating Wild's behaviour in a relative (and therefore ambiguous) way:

> The Count, little suspecting that Wild had been the sole Contriver of the Misfortune which had befallen him, rose up, and eagerly embraced him; and Wild . . . returned his Embrace with equal Warmth. (I, 11) (my emphasis)

Due to the ambiguity, the satire of such passages reflects on both parties of the comparison. Occasionally the ambiguity is well signalled by the rhetorical build-up which precedes it, as when the narrator solemnly concludes: ". . . had Alexander the Great been hanged, it would not in the least have diminished my Respect to his Memory" (IV, 13). But quite as often, the ambiguous element is slipped in edgewise, as it were:[19]

> Indeed . . . [Laetitia] was so extremely fond of this Youth, that she often confessed to her female Confidents, if she could ever have listened to the Thought of living with any one Man, Mr. Bagshot was he. (I, 12)

A. R. Humphreys, who notes the beauty of this particular sentence, concludes that Fielding's "favourite types of ambiguity" are innuendo or double-entendre, and that these, however clever, are "sharply limited and soon exhausted" of meaning.[20] But Humphrey's generalization does not account for the diverse examples of ambiguity which have just been presented, nor for statements like the following one, which may appear to be a simple double-entendre:

> The Tea-Table was soon called for, at which a Discourse passed between these young Lovers, which could we set down with any Accuracy, would be very edifying as well as entertaining to our Reader. . . . (I, 9) (my emphasis)

Aside from the insinuation about the level of "Discourse" between Wild and Tishy, the phrase has a secondary effect of

satirizing the narrator himself, by reminding the reader of the gap between the narrator's promises of historical fidelity and his contrary "embellishment" of the facts he does relate. Thus there is often a reference to the more serious themes of the book even where Fielding's wit may seem superficial.

Of all the more complex ironic techniques employed in Wild, perhaps the kind most clearly demonstrating Fielding's intelligence and skill is the mock-logic which pervades Wild's speeches especially, but is also common in the narrator's commentary. An excellent example of the narrator's strange mode of reasoning is the chapter where he explains how Wild recovers his life after leaping into the sea from a lifeboat. He begins by calling Wild's escape "miraculous," but proceeds to explain why it was not miraculous, and discredits the reliance by biographers on supernatural agents. He then turns round to make Nature a supernatural agent, in effect, by having her "whisper" in Wild's ear her command that he "attempt the recovery of his Boat" (II, 13). The Great Wild manages the swim with ease, "being a good Swimmer" (also, one must remember, because the sea is perfectly calm). By representing Wild's survival as directed by "Nature," the narrator avoids implying that Wild is as incapable of a noble suicide by drowning as he was of a stoic starvation in the boat.

The tangled reasoning of the narrator is not simply a comic entertainment for the reader, but is a constant symbol of the devious nature of Great Men's minds, as well as a demonstration of the laborious nature of hypocrisy.[21] The reader is often at some pains to extract the simple truth from the narrator's account of events:

> . . . Fireblood, who was no backward Youth, began to take her by the Hand, and proceeded so warmly, that, to imitate his Actions with the Rapidity of our Narration, he in a few Minutes ravished this fair Creature, or at least would have ravished her, if she had not, by a timely Compliance, prevented him. (III, 7)

By a very neat twist, Laetitia's acceptance is thus made to appear like a rejection. Likewise, the narrator delights in instructing his more "simple" (i.e., honest) readers in the hard complexities of a Great Man's strategy; for example, with the tortuously stated cardinal rule: "NEVER TRUST THE MAN WHO HATH REASON TO SUSPECT THAT YOU KNOW HE HATH INJURED YOU" (III, 4). The convoluted syntax of this sentence seems emblematic of Wild's mind, and of both Wild's and the narrator's notion that human nature is devious. The narrator's assumptions about human nature are very neatly implied in his first words to the reader, although the significance of this passage may be overlooked on a first or second reading:

> . . . [History is not only entertaining but instructive]; for besides the

> attaining hence a consummate Knowledge of human Nature in general; its secret Springs, various Windings, and perplexed Mazes. . . . (I, 1) (my emphasis)

Another noticeable feature of Wild's and the narrator's syntax, in addition to its convolution, is its tendency towards negative statement. This is evident not only in the cardinal rule noted above ("NEVER TRUST THE MAN . . ."), but also in Wild's long speech on the nature of "Honour," which he defines largely by negation:

> Is Honour Truth? No. It is not in the Lie's going from us, but in its coming to us our Honour is injured. (I, 13)

This habit of negation may be partly a reflection of habitual dishonesty, but has another interesting effect in terms of the message of the book as a whole. Since the act of negation itself tends logically to imply the actual or positive existence of whatever is being negated, the doctrines or maxims presented by the narrator appear to be mere reactions to the doctrines or maxims they oppose, which seem to have a prior and somehow absolute existence. The doctrine of goodness is therefore paradoxically strengthened by constant negation.

For similar reasons, mock-logic is a useful ironic tool for promoting the truths which Fielding is concerned with. In the course of their circuitous reasoning, both Wild and the narrator often reason from false premises to true

conclusions. An example of this process occurs when Wild reasons away his pangs of conscience over Heartfree's impending execution:

> What is the Life of a single Man? Have not whole Armies and Nations been sacrificed to the Humour [1754 revision: "Honour"] of ONE GREAT MAN? (IV, 4)

Wild deduces from the wholesale slaughters of war that an individual human life is not worth much, but fails to see that his conclusion ("What is the Life of a single Man?"), if logically extended, must also apply to the "ONE" Great Man who places himself in a supposedly superior position. The signal which Fielding gives to the reader (by capitalizing "one") tends to be overlooked because it is juxtaposed with "GREAT MAN," which the reader is accustomed to seeing capitalized and tends to dismiss as an empty title. Still, even after this hint is recognized, the irony remains particularly subtle and impressive.

Similar examples of true ethical conclusions which are based on what Fielding would consider unethical premises abound in Wild, beginning with the narrator's introductory argument, where he expresses his main lesson: "that no Mortal, after a thorough Scrutiny, can be a proper Object of our Adoration" (I, 1). The irony of his argument, of course, is that he arrives at this "true" conclusion from a direction contrary to what we are led to expect; that is,

that even the "Greatest" men are flawed by the human tendency towards goodness. Later, the narrator hesitantly states his wish that no Great Men had ever been allowed to be born, since their existence is so filled with anxiety and misery (I, 14). The stress in this rhetorically elegant argument is placed on the misery of Great Men, rather than on the misery of the masses who suffer for him. In the final statement, however, the 'tortured masses' are shifted (apparently casually) from a subordinate to a main clause: ". . . Lastly, when I consider whole Nations extirpated only to bring Tears into the Eyes of a GREAT MAN . . ." (I, 14). This stress-shift suffices nicely to undermine the narrator's narrow focus on the Great Man, while still not affecting the narrator's ironic consistency.

The same ironically logical process (from false premises to true conclusions) is exploited constantly on the frequent occasions when Wild reasons with himself. When he reasons (or argues) with others, he tends instead to draw false conclusions from true premises. For example, he tries to convince Marybone that he should not balk at murder, since it is not much worse than the commonplace, accepted practices of robbing a man of all he has, or destroying a man's reputation or livelihood (III, 3). But in Wild's soliloquies, the reasons he assigns to the true conclusions which occur to him (apparently a priori) are quite the

reverse of the traditional ones we might expect:

> Better had it been for me to have observed the simple Laws of Friendship and Morality, than thus to ruin my Friend [Heartfree] for the Benefit of others. I might have commanded his Purse to any degree of Moderation, I have now disabled him from the Power of serving me. (II, 4)

The illogic of the Ordinary of Newgate is amply demonstrated in his conversation with Wild ["Nothing is so sinful as Sin, and Murther is the greatest of all Sins; it follows, that whoever commits Murther is happy in suffering for it . . ." (IV, 14)]; yet even the Ordinary has some insight: ". . . [even] if you [Wild] are guilty of Theft, you make some Attonement by suffering for it, which many others do not."

The ironic effectiveness of such mock-logic passages is mainly due to their implication that "truth" or moral standards exist independently or a priori, and that Great Men necessarily apprehend these standards of action, even when they choose to act differently, in accordance with their conflicting desires. From this point of view, then, Fielding's irony is primarily "reassuring," or based on an orthodox belief in absolutes, as Humphreys has argued.[22] What is satirical (i.e., unsettling)[23] about Fielding's ironic stance in Wild, is his attempt to overturn the reader's comfortable assumptions that society operates in a manner consistent with received standards; generally there

is no attempt to overthrow the standards themselves. And though Fielding is relatively optimistic about the rational capacities of men, his observations concerning their actual behaviour are frequently quite unflattering and provocative. This is particularly evident in passages such as the one where "Readers of Romances" are compared with the credulous audience of England's political farces (III, 11) (see above, pp. 52-53).

Fielding's skillful employment of subtle ironic devices such as mock-logic and ambiguity (which are considerably more complex in their effect than simple blame-by-praise or praise-by-blame irony), together with the demonstrable coherence and consistency of his ironic stance and the very serious thematic purposes which are served by his "wordplay," should indicate that Jonathan Wild is not a "hobbledehoy" production (as Leavis would have it). Furthermore, the comic tone of most passages, and the calm, intellectual motivation behind Wild's more philosophical passages demonstrate that Wild is not a humorless moral diatribe (as Wright calls it). Although the stylistic level of the irony is sometimes awkwardly uneven, one may argue that this is partly due to Fielding's concern lest the point of the irony be overlooked or misconstrued by his less sensitive readers. In fact, his revisions of a number of passages for the 1754 edition tend to make the irony more

explicit; for example:

> . . . when I consider whole Nations extirpated only to bring Tears into the Eyes of a GREAT MAN, that he hath no more Nations to extirpate, then indeed I am almost inclined to wish that Nature had spared us this her MASTERPIECE. . . . (1743 ed.; I, 14)

> . . . when I consider whole Nations extirpated only to bring Tears into the Eyes of a GREAT MAN, not, indeed, because he hath extirpated so many, but because he had no more Nations to extirpate, then indeed I am almost inclined to wish that Nature has spared us this her MASTERPIECE . . . . (1754 ed.; I, 14)

Though such revision sadly weakens the irony, it is clearly motivated by Fielding's recognition of the problems inherent in irony, given the intellectual range of his audience. As he explained a few years after the first publication of Wild, in an essay in his Jacobite's Journal:

> '. . . though irony is capable of furnishing the most exquisite ridicule, yet as there is no kind of humour so liable to be mistaken, it is of all others the most dangerous to the writer. An infinite number of readers have not the least taste or relish for it, I believe I may say do not understand it; and all are apt to be tired, when it is carried to any degree of length.'[24]

Despite these difficulties, the ironic skill which Fielding exhibits in Jonathan Wild is impressive, and Wild is a rewarding book for those readers who have some understanding of the contemporary targets of its satire and burlesque, and (what is more important) for those who are

sensitive to those pleasures of ironic language which are only apprehended through very close reading. In attempting to evaluate the "tone," purpose, or sophistication of Jonathan Wild, one must consider not only the more obvious, traditional devices of irony and wordplay which are present, but also the subtler details of vocabulary and sentence structure which contribute fundamentally to the satire as a whole. For the reader's interest in Wild is not sustained by its characters, its "fable," or its explicit moral, but rather by qualities of its style which agree well with the qualities Dryden admired in Horace's satire:

> Horace is teaching us in every line, and is perpetually moral. . . .[25]

FOOTNOTES

Chapter One

[1] F.R. Leavis, "The Great Tradition," in his *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1960), p. 3.

[2] Ibid., p. 4.

[3] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[4] Ibid., p. 4.

[5] Andrew Wright, *Henry Fielding: Mask and Feast* (London: Chatto and Windus Ltd., 1965), p. 45.

[6] Ibid., p. 173.

[7] Ibid., p.44.

[8] Ibid., p. 56.

[9] F. Homes Dudden, *Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times*, two volumes (1952; reprinted Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1966), Vol. 2, p. 1110.

[10] Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 485.

[11] *Henry Fielding: Mask and Feast*, p. 168.

[12] George Saintsbury, "Introduction" to *Jonathan Wild and The Voyage to Lisbon*, by Henry Fielding (Everyman's Library) (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1932), p. x.

[13] Robert H. Hopkins, "Language and Comic Play in Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*," *Criticism* 8 (1966), pp. 213-28.

[14] Fielding himself seems to have favored *Joseph Andrews* over his earlier works (including *Jonathan Wild*), though his reasons are not recorded: "According to the testimony of [Joseph] Warton, Fielding in 1746 set a higher value upon *Joseph Andrews* than upon any of his previous works" (Frederic T. Blanchard, *Fielding the Novelist* (1926; reissued New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1966), p. 13). Still, the fact that Fielding took the trouble shortly before his death to revise *Jonathan Wild* (1754) may indicate

that he considered Wild quite an important work.

[15] George Saintsbury, pp. vii-viii.

[16] W.R. Irwin, "Satire and Comedy in the Works of Fielding," ELH 13 (1946), p. 169.

[17] "Language and Comic Play . . .," pp. 214 ff.

[18] A.E. Dyson, "Fielding: Satiric and Comic Irony," in his The Crazy Fabric: Essays in Irony (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1965), p. 16.

[19] Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Some Reflections on Satire," in Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Ronald Paulson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), p. 364.

[20] Ibid., pp. 362-63.

[21] Quoted by Spacks, p. 375.

[22] P.K. Elkin, The Augustan Defence of Satire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 11.

[23] John Dryden, "A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire," in Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), Vol. 2, p. 47.

[24] Ibid., p. 79.

[25] Ibid., p. 83.

[26] The Augustan Defence of Satire, p. 173.

[27] Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Riverside Edition) (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), pp. 10-12. All references to Joseph Andrews will be to this edition.

[28] "Discourse concerning . . . Satire," p. 97.

[29] This aspect of Fielding's ethical beliefs is well summarized by Ronald Paulson, Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 99.

[30] Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), p. 18.

[31] "Some Reflections on Satire," p. 372.

[32] "Discourse concerning . . . Satire," pp. 102-04.

[33] Paulson, Satire and the Novel . . . ., p. 21.

[34] "Language and Comic Play . . .," p. 214.

[35] "Discourse concerning . . . Satire," pp. 92-93.

[36] The Augustan Defence of Satire, p. 11.

[37] Covent Garden Journal, no. 21; quoted by Elkin, The Augustan Defence of Satire, p. 81.

[38] The Champion, 10 June 1740; quoted by Aurelian Digeon, The Novels of Fielding (1925; reissued New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962), p. 24.

[39] For example, critics do not seem to consider to what degree the "Author's Preface" to Joseph Andrews may parody the excesses of other writers. Fielding's extensive discussion of his new genre, the "comic romance" or "comic epic-poem in prose," may in fact be to a large degree self-satire or satire on the literary pretentions of others (perhaps after the model of the facetious titles which are promised by the Author in Swift's Tale of a Tub; for example, "An analytical Discourse upon Zeal, histori-theophysi-logically considered") (Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels and other Writings, ed. Louis A. Landa (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, 1960), p. 242). Mark Spilka seems to point in the right direction when he argues that we should interpret the phrase "comic epic poem in prose" to mean "mock-epic poem in prose," since Joseph Andrews is largely generic satire ("Fielding and the Epic Impulse," 1969; rpt. in Henry Fielding und der Englische Roman . . . ., 1972, p. 272).

Chapter Two

[1] David L. Evans, "The Theme of Liberty in Jonathan Wild," Papers on Language and Literature 3 (1967), p. 303.

[2] John Edwin Wells, "Fielding's Political Purpose in Jonathan Wild," PMLA 28 (1913), p. 14.

[3] Ibid., p. 54.

[4] Henry Fielding, The Life of Jonathan Wild (The World's Classics) (1743 ed.; reprinted London: Oxford

University Press, 1932), pp. 191-97. Further references to Jonathan Wild will be to this edition and will be cited parenthetically by Book and Chapter numbers. Contained in an appendix to this edition are the variants which appear in the 1754 edition.

[5] F. Homes Dudden, Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times, two volumes (1952, The Clarendon Press; reprinted Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1966), pp. 462-63. Dudden essentially repeats John Wells's interpretation of this chapter.

[6] Ibid., p. 463.

[7] William Robert Irwin, The Making of Jonathan Wild (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p. 44.

[8] Allan Wendt, "The Moral Allegory of Jonathan Wild," ELH 24 (1957), p. 306.

[9] The Making of Jonathan Wild, p. 91.

[10] C. J. Rawson, Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal Under Stress (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1972), p. 102.

[11] Ibid., p. 217.

[12] Satire and the Novel . . . ., p. 83.

[13] W. H. Auden, "Satire," in Satire: Modern Essays . . . ., ed. Ronald Paulson, p. 203.

[14] Dudden, Vol. 1, pp. 475-76.

[15] Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal . . . ., pp. 233-34.

[16] "The Moral Allegory . . .," p. 313.

[17] Dudden, Vol. 1, p. 476.

[18] A passage of this kind is quoted by Wendt ("The Moral Allegory . . .," p. 310) as a sample of Fielding's moral and religious beliefs:

> 'a glorious consideration for the virtuous man, is that he may rejoice even in the never attaining that which he so well deserves, since it furnishes him with a noble argument for the certainty of a

future state" (The Champion, 4 March 1739-40).

[19] Satire and the Novel . . . ., p. 95.

[20] Henry Knight Miller, "Some Functions of Rhetoric in Tom Jones," PQ 45 (1966), p. 224.

[21] George R. Levine, Henry Fielding and the Dry Mock (The Hague: Mouton & Co., Publishers, 1967), pp. 32-33.

[22] Satire and the Novel . . . ., p. 95.

[23] Bernard Shea, "Machiavelli and Fielding's Jonathan Wild," PMLA 72 (1957), p. 73.

[24] Reprinted in Selected Poetry and Prose of Daniel Defoe, ed. Michael F. Shugrue (Rinehart Editions) (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), pp. 270-308. All references to Defoe's Life of Wild will be by page number to this edition. The original was published 8 June 1725, about two weeks after Wild's execution at Tyburn.

[25] Glenn Hatfield (Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 47) concludes that Fielding's "habit of 'translating' his more florid metaphors into 'plain English' indicates that he is conscious of the obfuscation figurative language can lead to. This distrust of the metaphor, moreover, is at least partly Lockean in its rationale." (That is, the 'original idea' of a word is lost when its metaphorical usage becomes habitual). In his Spectator essays on wit, Addison had given prominence to Locke's view of metaphor. Whereas wit involves "'. . . putting together . . . with quickness and variety, [those ideas] wherein can be found any resemblance or congruity," in order to please the imagination of the audience, ". . . judgment . . . lies . . . in separating carefully . . . ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being misled by similitude . . . . This is a way of proceeding quite contrary to metaphor and allusion. . . .'" (Spectator 62; 11 May 1711).

[26] [Henry Fielding], Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq.; Volume One (Wesleyan Edition of the Works), ed. Henry Knight Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 8. It is possible that Fielding is referring both to Defoe's Life of Wild and to the hack biography by William Musgrave which Edmund Curll had commissioned for Robert Walpole ("this Great Man"?) in 1738. (Hatfield describes Musgrave's

biography in more detail.)

[27] Fielding's disgust with the practice of obituary and marriage columns in newspapers--their gossipy quality and overuse of pseudo-genteel superlatives such as "eminent," is discussed at length by Hatfield (pp. 87-88), who mentions the pertinent satire on abused terms like "honor," "virtue," "learned," and "eminent" in Jonathan Wild. A more elaborate discussion of the eighteenth-century tendency, among both the middle and upper classes, to work old superlatives to death and invent new, even emptier ones, may be found in William Mathews' "Polite Speech in the Eighteenth Century," English 1 (1937), 493-511.

[28] Robert M. Wallace ("Fielding's Knowledge of History and Biography," SP 44 (1947), p. 97) quotes one of Fielding's essays (Champion, 1741 ed., vol. I, p. 278) in a discussion of Fielding's criticism of "the usual intervention of the supernatural in epic," as it concerned Fielding's ethical beliefs:

> Such an attitude toward fortune and against divine intervention draws a sharp distinction between epic and history. Fielding returned to the idea in other connections. "Envy, Pride, Ill nature, and ill Judgment of Mankind," he said . . ., ". . . make up what we generally call ill Fortune."

[29] Irwin, "Satire and Comedy . . .," pp. 169-73.

[30] Here I disagree with C. J. Rawson, who feels there is no irony intended in this statement. He cites the following passage from Fielding's Preface to the Voyage to Lisbon (1755), as evidence that Fielding approved of the historian's right to embellish his subject's speeches (Rawson, Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal . . ., p. 166, n. 4):

> Some few embellishments must be allowed to every historian: for we are not to conceive that the speeches in Livy, Sallust, or Thucydides, were literally spoken in the very words in which we now read them. It is sufficient that every fact hath its foundation in truth, as I do seriously aver is the case in the ensuing pages. . . . (Fielding, Voyage to Lisbon, p. 29)

The context in Voyage to Lisbon does indicate that this comment is straightforward. In Jonathan Wild, however, Fielding's similar comment seems to be aimed at those historians (including the narrator) who twist or abuse this liberty for partisan ends, or to indulge their own stylistic vanity. Certainly, the narrator in Wild strains ridiculously to embellish his own as well as Wild's rhetoric.

[31] Again I differ with Rawson, who feels that the historians involved are only "superficial objects" of the satire in Wild, the main target being the morally corrupt great men. But the evidence Rawson cites seems, if anything, to support the opposite view (Rawson, pp. 148-50). Also, Rawson does concede that Fielding, along with Richardson and others, disapproved somewhat of the epic poets such as Homer, whose celebration of Achilles' exploits inspired Alexander to war and plunder (Rawson, p. 156).

[32] Hatfield notes that Walpole himself did not especially abuse the language--that this characteristic of his regime was rather a fault of his "paid ministerial press" and of hired hacks such as William Musgrave, who wrote the Brief and True History of Sir Robert Walpole and His Family (1738) (Glenn Hatfield, Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony, p. 99). Fielding undoubtedly had these writers in mind when composing Jonathan Wild.

[33] The panegyric history represents an abuse of the historian's proper role, as the Augustans generally defined it, a role similar to the satirist's: to mingle judgment with " 'the Narration of things.' " As Paulson explains, the historian was expected to punish tyrants by warning them of their future bad reputation, as tyrants are kept " 'more in awe' " by their " 'future Fame' " than by their conscience (Paulson, Satire and the Novel . . . ., p. 151).

[34] Gerald Howson, Thief-Taker General: The Rise and Fall of Jonathan Wild (London: Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1970), p. 273.

[35] "Discourse concerning . . . Satire," p. 97. See above, p. 10.

Chapter Three

[1] Irwin, *The Making of Jonathan Wild*, p. 91.

[2] Dudden, *Henry Fielding . . . .*, Vol. 1, pp. 472-73.

[3] "The Moral Allegory of *Jonathan Wild*," *ELH* 24 (1957), pp. 306-20.

[4] Evans, "The Theme of Liberty in *Jonathan Wild*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 3 (1967), 302-13.

[5] For example, Bernard Shea argues that *Wild* is primarily a political satire, with Machiavelli's writings as the "prime target." (Shea, "Machiavelli . . .," p. 60). Although Shea draws some seemingly valid and significant parallels between the attitudes and statements of *Wild*'s narrator and those of Machiavelli as represented by his English translator, Shea's attempt to show minute plot correspondences between *Jonathan Wild* and Machiavelli's *Life of Castruccio Castracani* seems dubious, if not trivial, and really irrelevant to Fielding's major purposes and achievements in *Wild*.

[6] Farrell notes that the anonymous *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* (1741) had already parodied the practice of even the learned eighteenth-century biographers who still relied on the "conventional topics" of their subject's ancestry and parentage, a panegyric on his birthplace, reference to "alleged prodigies at his nativity, a learned account of his full name, and the usual description of his education . . ." (Farrell, "The Mock-Heroic Form of *Jonathan Wild*," *MP* 63 (1966), pp. 220-25).

[7] Farrell, "The Mock-Heroic Form . . .," p. 223.

[8] "The Nature and Modes of Narrative Fiction," in *Approaches to the Novel*, ed. Robert Scholes (Revised Edition) (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1966), p. 11.

[9] This is Aurelien Digeon's theory (*The Novels of Fielding*; 1925, reissued New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962, p. 107, n. 2).

[10] Although Wild is a violent man, descriptions of his violent actions tend to be understated.

[11] Shea, "Machiavelli . . .," p. 55; Hopkins, "Language and Comic Play . . .," p. 216.

[12] Wells, "Fielding's Political Purpose . . .," p. 14.

[13] An important exception to this is the occasional usage of the term "great" with reference to the Heartfrees. For example, the narrator refers casually to Heartfree's "several great Weaknesses of Mind" (II, 1). Since "great" is not capitalized, it at first appears to be only an intensifier meaning "large" or "excessive." However, one may legitimately read this ironically, such that Heartfree's "weaknesses" are truly "great" or commendable (by Fielding's moral standards). Heartfree is never called Great, as Wild is.

[14] Wild's interpretation of his definition of "Honour" stresses the security of the "Honourable" man, since no deed of his can cause him to lose his title ("Think not any Thing a Man commits can forfeit his Honour."). At the same time, however, the passage implies that the situation of Great Men is a peculiarly insecure one, since a Great Man relies on the whim of the public for his reputation. Both interpretations are possible due to the ambiguous statement: ". . . while he is so called, he so remains, and no longer."

[15] "Language and Comic Play . . .," p. 213.

[16] Robert Alter discusses the similar satiric usage of "Convenience" in this sense in Tom Jones (Alter, Fielding and the Nature of the Novel; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968).

[17] Hatfield, Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony, pp. 146-47.

[18] As defined by Gerald Howson, Thief-Taker General . . ., p. 24.

[19] Defoe's narrator, like Fielding's, inserts a number of underworld jargon or "cant" words into his history, translating them for the benefit of the reader. For example, we are informed that Mrs. Milliner used to take Wild out with her "upon the TWANG: This is One of the Cant Words for those who attend upon the Night-walking Ladies in their Progress" (277). In both histories cant seems to serve several purposes. In Defoe's usage one senses a degree of conscious mockery of Wild and other criminals, through a seemingly serious attention to their jargon. Alternatively, his narrator may only be trying to adhere faithfully to Wild's own words, as he pledges to do. It is also possible that Defoe himself is satisfying his own and the average "romance" reader's fascination with the exotic: including

strange customs and strange language. In Fielding's case, aside from the semantic implications of slang and cant, there seems to be some usage of cant terms for their inherent amusement value only (words which, like "TWANG," sound funny), or perhaps for the main purpose of parodying or ridiculing their liberal usage in rogue biographies like Defoe's.

[20] Eleanor Newman Hutchens, Irony in Tom Jones (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1965).

[21] Dudden (Henry Fielding . . . . , Vol. 1, pp. 272-74) discusses Fielding's theory of good nature in detail, and quotes the following definition of "good nature" from Fielding's Champion (27 Mar. 1740):

> " '. . . a delight in the happiness of mankind, and a concern at their misery, with a desire, as much as possible, to procure the former and avert the latter; and this with a constant regard to desert.' "

In other words, benevolence becomes foolish if it is aimed indiscriminately at the unworthy and worthy alike, without regard to their "desert."

Chapter Four

[1] Though Wild's sustained verbal irony is frequently noted by critics, no systematic study of the narrator's character or the nature of the irony exists. Hopkins ("Language and Comic Play in Jonathan Wild") comments interestingly on Fielding's satiric use of the connotative implications of word-pairs such as 'liberty' and 'licentiousness,' or 'ravish' and 'rapture,' but he does not consider the ironic effect of the larger syntactic units of language. Other critics who have considered Fielding's techniques of verbal irony have concentrated on Tom Jones or Joseph Andrews. Hutchens (Irony in Tom Jones), like Hopkins, deals only with the "connotative irony" of individual words. Alter (Fielding and the Nature of the Novel) limits his discussion of significant syntactic features to some general, not very useful observations about "the periodic style" and the implications of antithesis.

[2] Leavis ("The Great Tradition"), for example, refers wearily to Wild's "famous irony."

[3] Dudden, Henry Fielding . . . . , Vol. 1, p. 485. A

slightly different criticism has been made that the irony in Wild is too harsh, not in a tonal or emotional sense, but in the sense of being overdone or forced on the reader. For example, Wright (Henry Fielding: Mask and Feast) complains about Wild's "rhetorical imperatives," and Rawson (Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal . . . .) refers to the "verbal insistence" of Wild.

[4] A. E. Dyson, "Fielding: Satiric and Comic Irony," in his The Crazy Fabric: Essays in Irony (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1965), p. 15.

[5] Digeon, The Novels of Fielding (1925; reissued New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962), p. 102.

[6] Ibid., pp. 114-115.

[7] Ibid., p. 123.

[8] Ibid., p. 122. The importance to style of sentence length per se is controversial. David Crystal and Derek Davy argue quite convincingly that mere sentence length is not a particularly distinctive characteristic:

> How long your sentence is depends as much on what you want to say as on how you decide to say it (that is, the content rather than the style). What is linguistically much more important is the type of sentence used, defined by reference to its internal structure, and the ways in which the sentences link up with each other within and between paragraphs.
> (Investigating English Style; London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1969, p. 181).

[9] For example, Rawson (Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal . . . ., p. 242) prefers those passages where Fielding avoids "fussy elaboration," thereby escaping the artificial tone or "sentimental-ironic schematism" which he feels is a fault of many of the Heartfree passages.

[10] The effect of the style in which the Count's end is described may perhaps bear some relation to Fielding's opinions concerning the execution of criminals in real life. He firmly believes that the shock value would be greater if public punishments were abandoned in favor of a rapid and behind-scenes execution (An Enquiry Into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers, &c. With Some Proposals for Remedying this Growing Evil; London: Printed for A. Millar,

1751). The briefer style in Wild seems in a similar way to take advantage of the audience's imagination. Furthermore, as Hutchens comments (Irony in Tom Jones), the device of verbal irony in general causes the reader to be more struck by ideas which he discovers himself through hints, than he would be by ideas which are simply told to him by an all-knowing narrator.

[11] As Thomas Cleary notes, lengthy sentences characterized by "Clausal parallelism, 'distributive' pleonasm [redundancy of expression which aids the rhythm], and the duplication of predicates" are common to Fielding's more straightforward style in the periodical essays (Henry Fielding as a Periodical Essayist; Princeton Univ., Ph. D., 1970, p. 112). What distinguishes the narrator of Wild's style from Fielding's style is the degree of parenthesis and periodicity. In the passage quoted as an example of the narrator's verbosity ["What had the Destroyers of Mankind . . . what had, I say, such as these to do with Clemency?" (IV, 16) (see above, p. 90)], the interruption "I say" (not typical of Fielding himself) is obviously intended to call attention to this sentence as unnecessarily inflated.

[12] This image of Wild is elaborated by Rawson in his description of Wild as a "clown" (Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal . . . .) (see above, p. 23).

[13] Mrs. Heartfree's character is possibly complicated here by an intention on Fielding's part to satirize Richardson's Pamela, as well as the sensational adventures in popular travel literature (Irwin discusses these targets in The Making of Jonathan Wild).

[14] "Introduction" to Jonathan Wild and the Voyage to Lisbon (Everyman's Library), p. viii.

[15] George R. Levine, Henry Fielding and the Dry Mock (The Hague: Mouton & Co., Publishers, 1967), p. 151.

[16] Hatfield (Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony) discusses at length Fielding's long-term campaign against this false gentility, particularly with reference to newspaper usage (see above, p. 47, n. 27). The extent to which the vice of euphemism was carried during the eighteenth century is evident in Susie Tucker's Protean Shape: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Vocabulary and Usage (London: The Athlone Press (Univ. of London), 1967). Tucker's collection of contemporary comments indicates that all levels of society were culpable:

> . . . whereas the ordinary people speak of a _bribe_, the better-bred speak of a _present_. . . . (_Spectator_ 394) [1712]

> The vulgar are influenced by names and letters. Instead of _SLAVES_, let the negroes be called _ASSISTANT-PLANTERS_ . . . . (letter to _Gentleman's Magazine_ 59 (1789), p. 334.)

[17] This interesting allusion is explained in detail by Hopkins ("Language and Comic Play . . .," 220-21).

[18] Stephen Ullmann defines and illustrates in detail this semantic phenomenon of "associative fields": "Every word is surrounded by a network of associations which connect it with other terms related to it in form, in meaning, or in both" (_Language and Style_; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964, p. 11). As Ullmann notes, associative fields are strong but vaguely outlined structures which vary from one language user to another.

[19] Hutchens (_Irony in Tom Jones_, p. 76) recognizes this sort of device as common in Fielding:

> One of the most frequent tonal devices in Fielding is the placing of important matter in a subordinate position in the sentence, so that its off-hand tone clashes with its decisive significance.

[20] "Fielding's Irony: Its Methods and Effects," _RES_ 18 (1942), 183-96.

[21] This important theme is nicely summarized in the final chapter:

> . . . whoever considers the common Fate of GREAT MEN must allow, they well deserve, and hardly earn that Applause which is given them by the World; for, when we reflect on the Labours and Pains, the Cares, Disquietudes, and Dangers which attend their Road to GREATNESS, we may say with the Divine, _that a Man may go to Heaven with half the Pains which it costs him to purchase Hell_. . . . (IV, 16)

[22] Humphreys contrasts Fielding's irony with Swift's:

> Fielding's irony . . . represents the social stability of its age, and instead of undermining reinforces orthodox

> morality. Consistently with this, it lacks philosophical and verbal complexity. ("Fielding's Irony . . .," p. 187)

Without considering Humphreys' belief that Swift's irony was meant to "undermine" orthodox morality, one may argue that Fielding's age--with its sharp increase in drunkenness and crime, and events such as the rebellion of 1745--was not particularly 'stable' socially. Humphreys seems to consider Fielding's irony less "complex" philosophically because, unlike Swift's, it does not shock or disgust the reader. However, one may argue that Fielding's irony does challenge the reader's intellect by its reliance upon semantic or syntactic nuances; hence it is 'philosophically complex' in a more abstract sense.

[23] The reference here is to Patricia Spacks' definition of satire as a genre of "uneasiness," of inseparable pleasure and pain (see above, p. 6).

[24] Cited by Thomas Lockwood, "The Augustan Author-Audience Relationship: Satiric vs. Comic Forms," ELH 36 (1969), p. 655.

[25] Dryden, "Discourse concerning . . . Satire," p. 83.

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Frye, Northrop. "The Mythos of Winter: Irony and Satire." Rpt. in Satire: Modern Essays . . . . (see below), pp. 233-48. Distinguishes irony from satire, but notes that the two can be combined (for example, in Jonathan Wild) without a loss of artistic "decorum."

Leavis, F. R. "The Irony of Swift." Scrutiny 2 (1933-34), 364-78. Interprets Swift's irony as "a fierce and insolent game" whereby Swift demonstrates his "superiority" to the world by betraying and

demoralizing the reader. Thus, despite its remarkable energy and imagery, Swift's art is essentially "negative" in effect.

Lockwood, Thomas. "The Augustan Author-Audience Relationship: Satiric vs. Comic Forms." ELH 36 (1969), 648-58.

Paulson, Ronald. Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1967.

Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism. Ed. Ronald Paulson. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971. Excellent source.

Spacks, Patricia Meyer. "Some Reflections on Satire." Rpt. in Satire: Modern Essays . . . . (see above), pp. 360-78. A particularly lucid and provocative essay.

The Novel

Approaches to the Novel: Materials for a Poetics. Ed. Robert Scholes (Revised Edition). San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1966. Conveniently assembles the standard modern essays on novel theory and technique.

Watt, Ian. The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964.

STYLE AND GRAMMAR

Croll, Morris W. "The Baroque Style in Prose." 1929; rpt. in Essays in Stylistic Analysis, ed. Howard S. Babb. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972, pp. 97-117. Makes useful distinction between rhetorical structure (as in "periods") and grammatical structure (as in "sentences").

Crystal, David and Derek Davy. Investigating English Style.

London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1969. Very detailed outline of kinds of linguistic features pertinent to style studies (phonology, graphology, grammar, vocabulary, semantics). Concentration on important sentence-linking and paragraph-formation features as well as individual sentences. Generalized pilot analyses (mainly of grammar) of a number of distinctive 'styles,' from legal documents to religious writing to ordinary conversation. No literary examples, although applications are inherent in examples given, since literature is a special use of English "where the total range of conceivable forms might occur."

Gordon, Ian. The Movement of English Prose. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1967. Excellent overview of English language development from Anglo-Saxon to present. Most useful for generalizations concerning essentially unchanging elements (stress patterns, vocabulary, phrase and sentence patterns, word order). More analytical than Sutherland's history (see below); therefore more useful in application.

Hough, Graham. Style and Stylistics (Concepts of Literature Series). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969. Brief, well-written history and critique of concept of style; sound conclusions concerning usefulness of style-study to literary criticism. Supports view (also in Crystal and Davy; see above) that style is simply "an aspect of meaning" ("difference of form is always difference of meaning").

Ohmann, Richard. "Literature as Sentences." 1966; rpt. in Essays in Stylistic Analysis. Ed. Howard S. Babb. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972, pp. 353-61. Distinguishes between style and meaning, unlike Hough and others (see above). Best of the attempts to relate style to generative grammar processes (i.e., "deep structures").

Sutherland, James. On English Prose. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957. Most interesting for discussion of contrasts between "Ciceronian style" ("public oratory") and "Senecan style" ("intimate discourse") as used in 17th and 18th-centuries.

Tufte, Virginia. Grammar as Style. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971. Deals one-by-one with major elements of syntax as variously used in modern writing. Examples are of interest, but treatment somewhat mechanical and aimed at students without sophistication in grammar.

Little analysis of reasons why stated effects are achieved by various structures.

Ullmann, Stephen. Language and Style. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964. Clear introduction to semantic problems (i.e., the inherent ambiguity of vocabulary) and various possible approaches to style. Stresses dependence of meaning on context. Examples from French prose and poetry, but transferrable to English due to marked semantic and stylistic similarities.

Ullmann, Stephen. Meaning and Style: Collected Papers (Language and Style Series). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973. Discusses artificiality of separating style from meaning. Concentrates on stylistics of semantic elements (lexis); i.e., overtones arising around either or both "name" and "sense" of words; and overtones due to relations between words.